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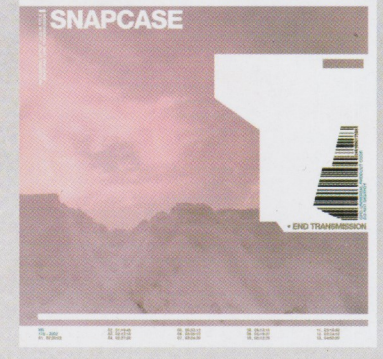

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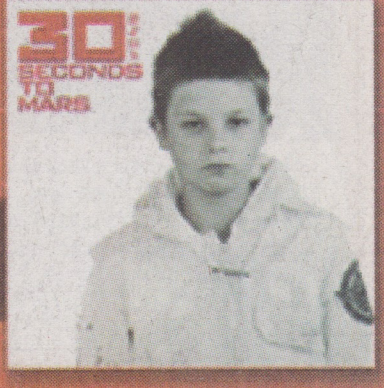

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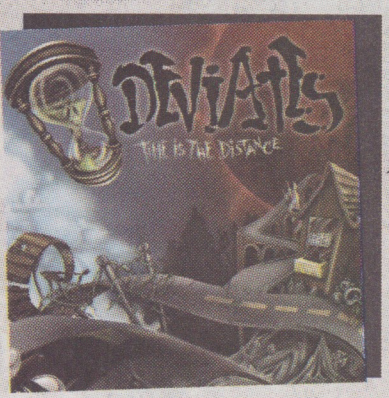

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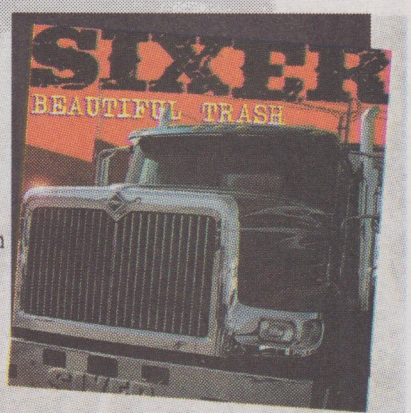

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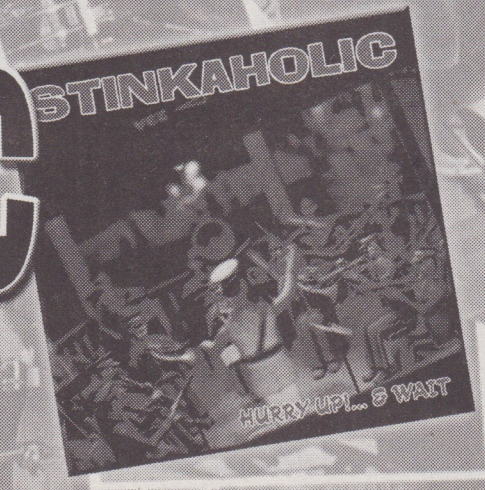

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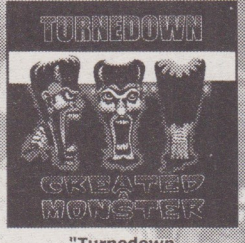

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Now Or Never Records Invites you to check out a free listen to **The Postman Sydrome**'s brilliant debut CD "Terraforming". The entire 12 tracks featured on the album are available in streaming audio.
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The Postman Syndrome

In Flames are currently on a six-week theater tour with **Slayer** and **Soulfly**. Upon completion, they will headline for two weeks with support from **Killswitch Engage**, Sentenced and **Dark Tranquility**, marking In Flames' third trip through the North America this year alone... **Tool** have once again asked Swedish speedballs **Meshuggah** to support them on the next leg of their Lateralus tour, see this months cover feature (duh) for more on this amazing band... Katla, singer for Finland based **Fintroll** has been forced to step down from vocal duties do a virus-based tumor that unfortunately struck his vocal cords. He has had three operations now since December of 2001 and the tumor has now spread into such an extent over the vocal cords that surgery can't be done without harming his voice permanently. There is a chance that will alternate, long-term treatment he might be able to return to vocal duties, but until then, bassist Somnium will be filling in on their tour throughout Europe with **Bornagar**, **Susperia**, **Suidakra**, and **Windir** from early- to mid-October... In other Finnish news, Finland's suicide rockers **Sentenced** will be embarking on a September tour beginning September 16th in San Francisco, California in support of their recent release, The Cold White Light. Joining them will be Gothenburg legends **Dark Tranquillity** supporting their exceptionally acclaimed album "Damage Done". Both bands will be

Fintroll

opening for Massachusetts' own **Killswitch Engage** and Swedish headliners **In Flames**. This will mark the first-ever North American tour for both **Sentenced** and **Dark Tranquillity**. "The Cold White Light is the only album I brought with me on the Slayer tour." - *Jesper Strömblad*, guitarist, **In Flames**. Now, that's one heavy testimonial.... **Viva Death**'s new album is out featuring 3 baritone guitars and the, 'if you've been in a band, he's probably been your drummer' Josh Freese. Originally titled 'Terrorism for Fun and Profit', the album had been postponed from it's original October 2001 release date. Founders Scott Shiflett and Trever Keith describe the creation as, "music that doesn't need to conform socially or politically to anything pleasant."... September marks the first annual *Home Invasion Tour*. The event is a celebration of skateboarding culture and lifestyle, combined with the independent spirit of punk rock music and featuring live music by: **Deviates**, **Mike V and the Rats**, **Heavy Trevy and the Not So Fat Kids**, **Rad**, **Sickshift**, **Sixer**, **Bullets N' Octane**, **Drowning Adam**, **Have You Seen Her**, **Kill The Messenger**, and **Lunacy**. Check www.homeinvasiontour.com for dates and venues... Epitaph Records just revamped their website. Featuring over 500 full-length MP3s available for download, a completely searchable

Madcap

video library containing over 240 music videos, live performance pieces and artist interviews, in-depth artist Press Kits, high resolution photos and more, the all-new www.epitaph.com is undoubtedly one of the most media intensive sites any record label has ever compiled... **Morbid Angel** guitarist Erik Rutan has announced he is leaving the band in order to devote himself entirely to the band he began forming in 1996, **Hate Eternal**... **Madcap** has a new album "East to West" that hit stores September 24th followed by a full US Tour in September/October with **HomeGrown**, **Mest** & **Catch 22**... **Brand New Sin** will hit the road with **Zakk Wylde's Black Label Society** beginning in September... **The Queers** will be heading to Japan for a tour... **The Eyeliners** will be touring this fall supporting **No Use For A Name**... **Destruction** will join **Kreator** on a September/October tour of North America dubbed "Hell Comes to Your Town". The bands, who helped define the thrash metal scene in the '80s with classic albums like Infernal Overkill and Eternal Devastation (Destruction) and Terrible Certainty and Extreme Aggression (Kreator), have never toured North America together before. **Cephalic Carnage** and **December** round out the bill... **Curl Up and Die** are confirmed as the opener for the **Thrice**, **Hot Water Music** tour from Oct 30th-Nov 6th... **Since By Man** just finished recording and mastering their upcoming full-length on "We Sing The Body Electric" to be released late Fall/early Winter of next year... **Christiansen** just added to the upcoming Fall tour with **Midtown**... The highly anticipated *Plea for Peace / Take Action* tour is about to launch. The nationwide tour (September 13th through October 28th) features **Anti-Flag**, **Armor For Sleep**, **The Bouncing Souls**, **Common Rider**, **Cursive**, **Dalek**, **The Donnas**, **Engine Down**, **From Autumn to Ashes**, **The (International) Noise Conspiracy**, **Isis**, **Jimmy Eat World**, **Last Place Champs**, **Lawrence**

The Eyeliners

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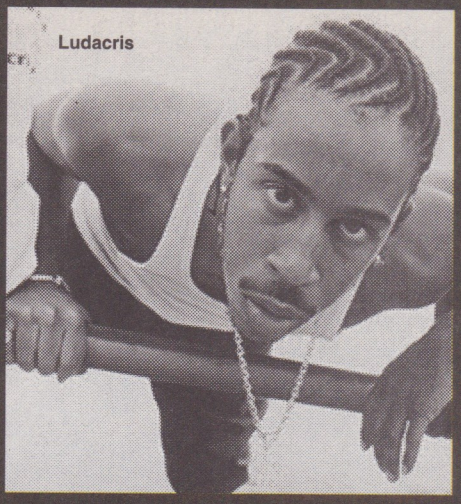
Check www.takeactiontour.com for what bands are appearing in your town, as the lineup changes often throughout the tour... Original **Stampin' Ground** drummer Ade Stokes has been replaced by English powerhouse Neil Hutton formerly of Death Metal artists **Benediction**. A new albums worth of material is to be recorded in October... **The Berzerker** are returning for their second US tour, this November, with **Immolation**, **Vader**, and **Origin**... **Bettie Serveert** is currently in the studio completing their fifth studio album, "Log 22"... New York City's **Lo-Hi**, which features members of **Boss Hog** and **Speedball Baby** are taking their hot rock and roll action on the road. Look for special dates with J Mascis (of **Dinosaur Jr.** fame)... **Skinlab** will perform Saturday, August 10th as part of the *Tattoo The Earth* weekend at the Oakland Coliseum in Oakland, California. The event will be hosted by acclaimed tattoo artist and festival brainchild, Paul Booth. The focus of this year's event will be more about the art, culture and history of tattoos and tattooing than the musical focus of Tattoo The Earth festivals of the past... This year's Punk-O-Rama Tour featuring **Guttermouth**, **1208**, **Gob**, **Authority Zero** and **Nerf Herder** and many a punk upstart to be added, kicks off Sept 15th (www.epitaph.com for details)... **Gomez** return to North America September 23rd for a long-awaited tour in support of their 2002 release, "In Our Gun"... **Kind of Like Spitting** lost their drummer days before embarking on a national tour. Cancel? Hardly. The group will be playing out the tour as a stripped down folk unit, adding an even more eclectic flair to an already individual slice of indie rock. Catch the unplugged version until their upcoming tour with **Saves the Day** in which they will be back to full rock fervor... "This is how you remind me..." **Nickleback's** frontman Chad Kroeger was pelted by rocks and bottles two songs into their recent set in Portugal. Ha. ... After ten years, three U.S. tours, five full-lengths and I don't know how many

Nickelback

7inches, **Cavity** will dissolve as a band. Citing creative differences as well as differences in commitment to the band among members, bassist Dan Gorostiaga announced the break-up... Pepsi-Cola of North America said recently that it was yanking its 30-second television spot featuring rapper **Ludacris** off the air. "I


Ludacris

don't think we knew the extent" to which his material was sexually explicit, said Pepsi spokesperson Bart Casabona, adding that the decision to drop the ads was "driven by the responses from our consumers." Considering the artist sells millions of albums, we wonder how many 'disgruntled Pepsi drinkers' it took to censure his lyrics of 'intoxication and woman degrading' from an ad campaign... Former **Helmet** frontman Page Hamilton performed a surprise set recently at a small bar in Stamford, CT with his new band **Gandhi** in which he played some of his former bands material along with new tracks. This bodes well for a Helmet reunion that is rumored to be taking place in 2003 once all of the former band members complete their current touring duties, as former drummer John Stainer is currently involved with **Tomahawk** and guitarist Chris Traynor is now a member of **Bush**... And to the Ozzfest powers that be, THANK YOU for adding the much needed San Diego stop to the tour. San Bernardino is a hell-hole and a rip off and was the only Southern California stop before the Chula Vista date was added. Anyone who has attended the SD Warped Tour will tell you, Coor's Amphitheater is a great outdoor venue for such a large tour.

"You kneel to the syringe." - Meshuggah

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

BY SHANNON WHEELER

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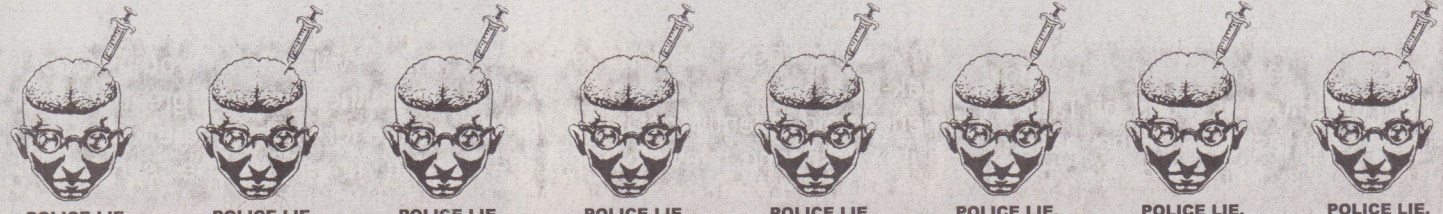
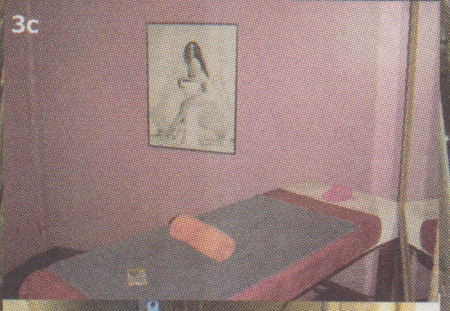


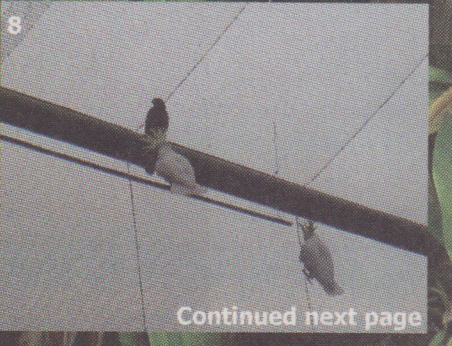
SCAMMING MY WAY INTO AUSTRALIA

Sometimes a man needs a long vacation. Also sometimes, that man is dirt poor. So, how to get to a place like Australia for cheap and/or free? Well, work with Modern Fix, a magazine with millions of readers and on newsstands nationwide. At least, that's the beginning of the lies I told to anyone who would listen.

This is my story about Australia, involving tons of animals, hotels, techno, trains, Irish pubs, cab drivers and paying a woman to give me a naked, oily massage.

Interested? Read the next page





Continued next page

Nobody likes to fly these days. Terrorism has really fucked the industry up. Currently, I'm being fondled by security at the LAX airport in Los Angeles. It was actually my fault, because in the hasta of packing and planning, I had put on my studded belt which, of course, makes the metal detector sound off. Now that I had removed it and my jacket, my tattoo's have excited the Taco Bell 2nd shift employee's, which is both irratiting and soothing. Soothing because **at least I know they'll search Brian Setzer before he blows up any planes**.

Getting this trip arranged was more a matter of luck and timing. Summer here is winter in Australia, which is good for tourists because airfare and hotels are cheap. Plus, know enough people who fly and you can scrape enough airline miles together to cut a trip for two in half.

I'm finally on the plane, squished between some guy and my girlfriend, who has the window seat. Unfortanly, the view is about 90% wing, so the window doesn't really do much. Comfort does not apply for a 17 hour airplane trip. We, as in me and 300 other uncomfortable people, watched six movies, one Friends episodes, and two episodes of Seinfeld in between two meals and snack servings, all which included free (!!) wine and coctails. I start my two weeks of drinking.

Let me explain about that; I'm labeled as a pothead, but I'm not full blown. I wear Seedless gear, I've got a glass bong, and I smoke once or twice every, or every other day. **Now while people who don't smoke will classify me as 'Massive Drug Addict',** people that do or are familiar realize otherwise. I partake, but at a vary low scale. That said, 14 days without marijuana was something I haven't done in years; at least seven. I tried to prepare, and attempted to coarse my girlfriend into concealing a small amount in her most sensative area. She originally agreed but later balked. Bitch!

Lightly buzzed and totally exhausted, we arrive in Sydney an hour later, on the same day we left from America, which is obviously wierd. Timezones, or something. Off to the hotel.

The hotel (**4**) is quite large for three floors, and very rich. I talked these people into exchanging room and board for coverage in the multi-national vacation magazine Modern Fix, which took a few phone calls and plenty of Photoshop to convince them MF was legit.

The first thing we did after unpacking was hop into a cab and ask for the nearest Irish pub. The thought of a thick Guiness actually repulses me, but I'm starving for something to do outside. While we were in the cab, I noticed the trend of techno.

There's thing that Australian's have with techno. It's everywhere. In the airport. In cabs. In every store. On the radio. In our hotels phone system. The Irish pub, McScruffys, is playing techno. Yikes. We drink a few and leave.

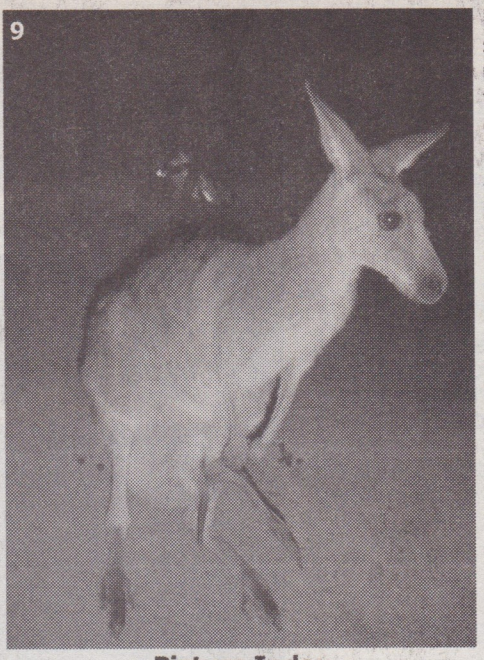
The next week and a half was spent on tourist stuff. You know, attracions and mueseums. The Sydnet Aquarium is supposed to be on par (amazement level, at least) to our San Diego Seaworld, which is okay if you like that sort of thing. Me? Seen one fish, seen 'em all. Granted, they have huge tanks that you walk thru, so the pathway is enveloped in a glass encased tunnel and the fish are all over, which are way cool. **But again, fish are fish.**

Almost the best wildlife is just outside. You've got massive amounts of colorful parrots of all shapes and sizes (**5**, **6**) flying around, and of course Kangaroo's and shit. I'm not a big fan of big (**9**) animals, unless I have a gun or at least some animal whacking tool. The beach is cool - lots of (**7**) lizards all over the rocks, and you can also find plenty of beggars (**10**) on the boardwalk. Probably the coolest thing I saw concerning animals was at this giant bird aviary. Inside was everything that's outside, except tame, so you can hold them. Everything was cool until a hawk starts hanging on the side of the fence, freaking all these birds out. In that picture (**8**), about 100 birds are mashed completely opposite of that side, while two cockatiels try to attack it.

On the second week, we did all the stuff I wanted to do. Hit up the bars. Walk around China town. Check out the record stores. Didn't see one tattoo shop. **Saw a lot of vomit, tho.** Australia doesn't have a drinking time; it's pretty much up to you. Saw quite a few people with beers just walking around. They do seem to have a problem with people smoking, (**11**), apparently.

Got to check out a few records store. Next Level Records (**2a**, **2b**) was probably the coolest. **They're all about hip hop CDs and vinyl, graffiti cans/nozzles, gear**, and even run their own label out of the store called Parallax View. You can check them on the web at www.nextlevelrecords.com.

Here's my favorite (and last thing) I did on this trip. I broke a secret to my girlfriend about an ill trip to a local massage parlor where, I learned from a friend who had made over two dozen trips there previously, they gave massages with 'full finishes', something I was a bit intrigued but wouldn't have gone had my friend not pushed me to. It actually went horribly; I came out $80 poorer, bruised and worst of all, terribly massaged and unrelieved. My girlfriend felt my pain, and we looked up "gentleman's massage" in the Australian yellow pages. After picking an establishment, we both went and checked it out. The front is discreet enough (**3a**), and after being buzzed in thru an intercom, was led into a tiny room. My girlfriend said goodbye, and walked back to the hotel. Bless her. The receptionist then had each woman there (nine of 'em) come individually introduce themselves to me. Two were hot. I picked Alice. **She was about 5'5", tight body, nice B tits, and wore a tiny outfit.** She led me to a room where, after the door was closed, I washed in a clear shower (**3b**) while she setup the room. While I dried off, she stripped and asked me to lay naked, stomach first, on the table (**3c**). The massage was decent, especially the front (lots of 'body slides' - where she, heh, slides on me) and, after a good half an hour, she 'finished the job'. And so appropriately, that was the finale of my trip. Australia rules.



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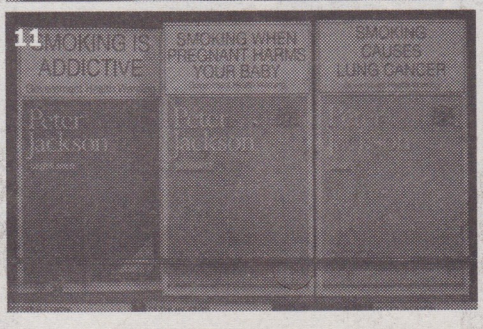

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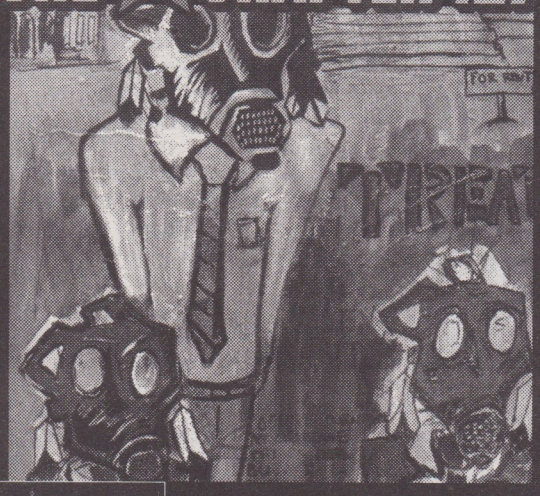

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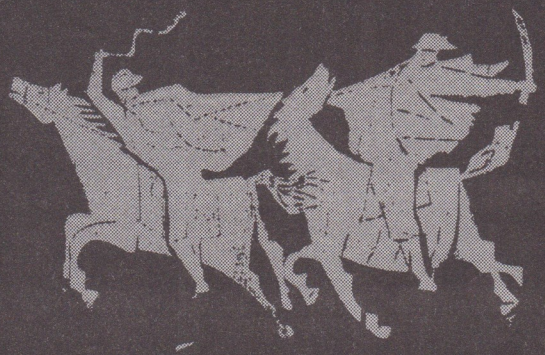

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BY SMAN

Fellow Fixer's and Fixee's-
I am Sman, puppeteer'd by none and prospector of all, this is my monthly Los @$$holes fix. Every month I will deal the junk about Tinsel Town, It's a nasty little habit but I am sure you will agree with me that nasty can be ALOT of fun!

This month we get a good clean Fix (well kinda, it's a little dirty) with **Leah Cevoli** owner of *Burst Productions*. If you have ever tried to gig in Tinsel Town you have probably run across Leah at some time, she is one of the hardest working promoters in LA. For those of you punks who haven't been ween'd off your mommy's milk box yet, to busy pacifying your selfish little Fix. Wipe your pathetic little chins, listen up... and learn something!

Why and how did you get into promoting?
Leah: I believe in following the things that just sort of pop into your life. Promoting was one of those things. I love music, always have (especially 80's Metal). I moved to LA in 1999, after an internship on the Poison Tour that year. I'm in town less then 6 months when I'm invited to see a friend's band at The Garage in Silverlake. Turns out that I had already met the gal that was promoting Thursdays there. Judy and I quickly became friends and she asked me to be her partner on what was then called Burst Thursdays. There has been a dozen other clubs since then, and Judy is no longer promoting with me, but she is one of the main reasons I became a promoter. I'm now currently running a very successful unsigned band competition, called Leader Of the Pack, every Monday Night at The Dragonfly in Hollywood
www.dragonfly.com.

What do you think it takes to be a successful promoter in Hollywood?
Honesty and Integrity are foremost. If you deal witheveryone in your life with honesty and respect you will succeed at whatever it is your doing. In the case of a promoter that means everyone from the bands, to the venues, to the staff, to those that hang out at your club. It also takes will power, determination, and quite a lot of self-esteem. Everyone has bad nights, but you have to look at the big picture and keep going. A strong support team helps as well. Other bookers and promoters that have your back when needed...Props out to JD@ Pretty Ugly, Sean Healy Presents, and Happenin Harry!! :)

Tell me your most embarrassing moment in Hollywood.
This is a tough one. I've never been one to get really embarrassed. My first big show at the Garage was with a band called Truth Movement (w/Corey Feldman), no one showed up.... That was pretty embarrassing. Other then, like disappointing turnouts, there's not much else to say.... There's the occasional drunken night out, but I've been blessed with so many friends out here, that someone always
makes sure I don't embarrass myself too much!

What do you look for in a band when you want to promote them?
They have to be cute and single!! No, I'm kidding but obviously good looks do help. First, and foremost I have to believe in their music. If I don't feel it, there's not much I can do for that band. I also look for a band that is organized and communicates with each other. I like to see that they have all the avenues covered, fliers, posters, stickers, website, email lists. It's not about numbers with me at first. One of my favorite bands out here right now is New Past Life. I booked this band back at The Garage and I think they brought 5 people. Normally, that would be it as far as a second booking, but there is something about this band that I LOVE! So I kept booking them, and kept booking them, they have played for me at just about every venue I've booked, and now they've got a large following! Sometimes it just takes a little time and patience...

Who is your favorite unsigned band right now?
I have a few. Superhero, New Past Life, Dumfinger, Beautiful Creatures, Acid 7, Exploiting Eve, King Cheetah, FTS, Bitter Things....

Your favorite signed band?
Um, newly signed? Diesel (J Records), Default, Incubus, Skid Row, Cinderella, Poison, Eminem, Madonna, The Calling...
I love all the new young singers out there also, Michelle Branch, Vanessa Carlton, Avril Lavigne.....

The best show you promoted, when, where and who was on the bill.
Well, I'm going to have to say my birthday party this year. Dragonfly, which is where I've been booking for over a year now, they let me hold a huge bday party this year the day after my birthday, May 5th. It was an incredible night. We started off with Ghost Town Rd, Cockpit, Acid 7, Dumfinger, New Past Life, King Cheetah, Bitter Things, and Callahan! All of my favorites! We had JD from The Pretty Ugly Club DJing and keeping me from embarrassing myself that night! I even got up and sang a Cars Cover with Dumfinger, and later pulled up some girlfriends on stage to do a karoake type version of James Taylor's "You've Got A Friend". So much fun!!!

Where will you be in 5 years?
Truthfully, I'm planning on acting and singing myself. I've recently started taking some acting lessons, got the headshots done and want to give it a whirl. I'd like to be in horror movies, soaps, and maybe do some print work. I also may begin singing back-up vocals for Bitter Things, and Dumfinger is willing to let me do a cover with them here and there. So hopefully, in five years you'll be interviewing me again, and I'll have so much more to tell you about!

Give us the junk, tell us a dirty little secrete about yourself no one else knows...
I don't have any!! I tell all of my secrets!!! There was this one time in Phoenix...oh and then there was Bike Week, oh and Vegas..... :) I can't my parents will read this, but if u hang out with me for any length of time, you'll hear all the stories!

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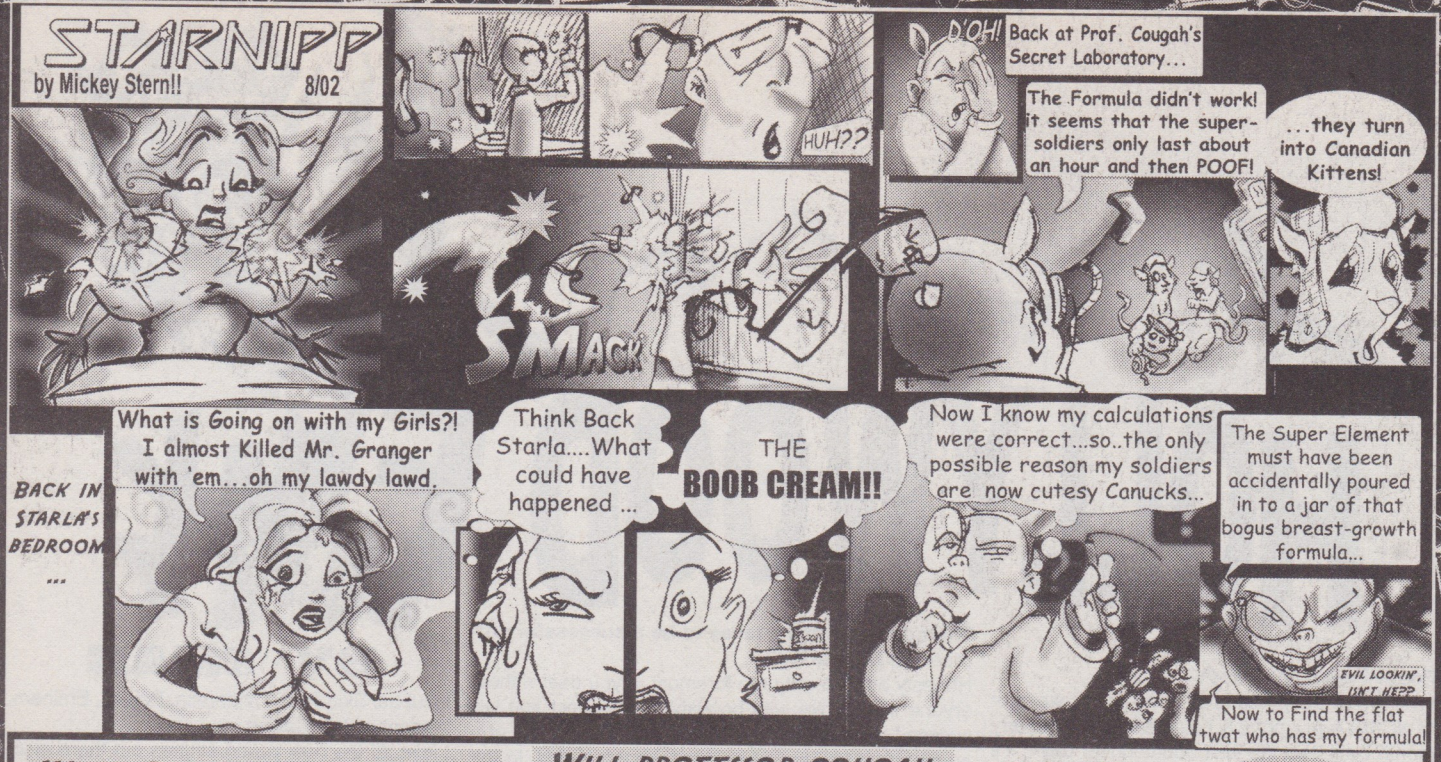
STARNIPP

by Mickey Stern!! 8/02



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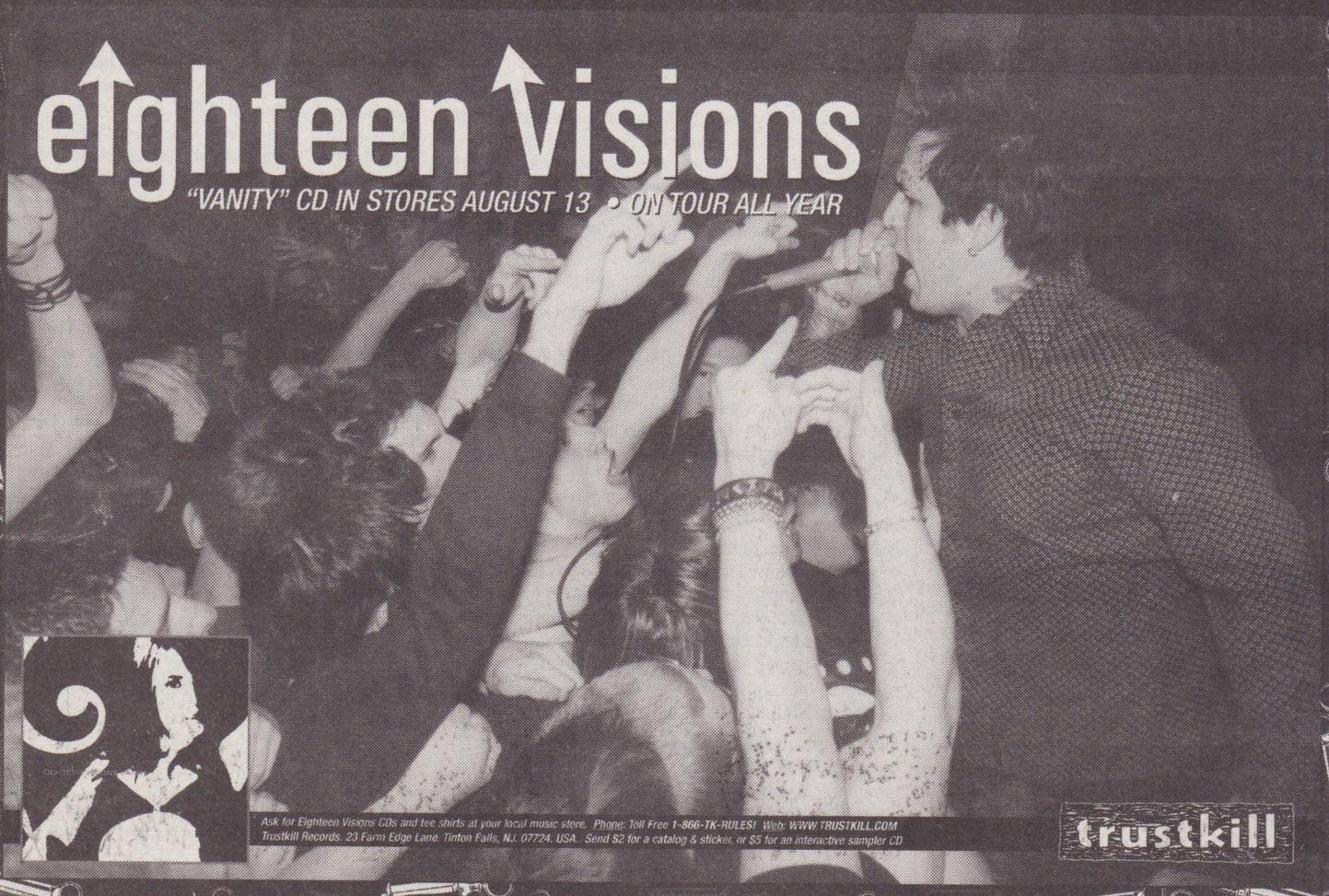

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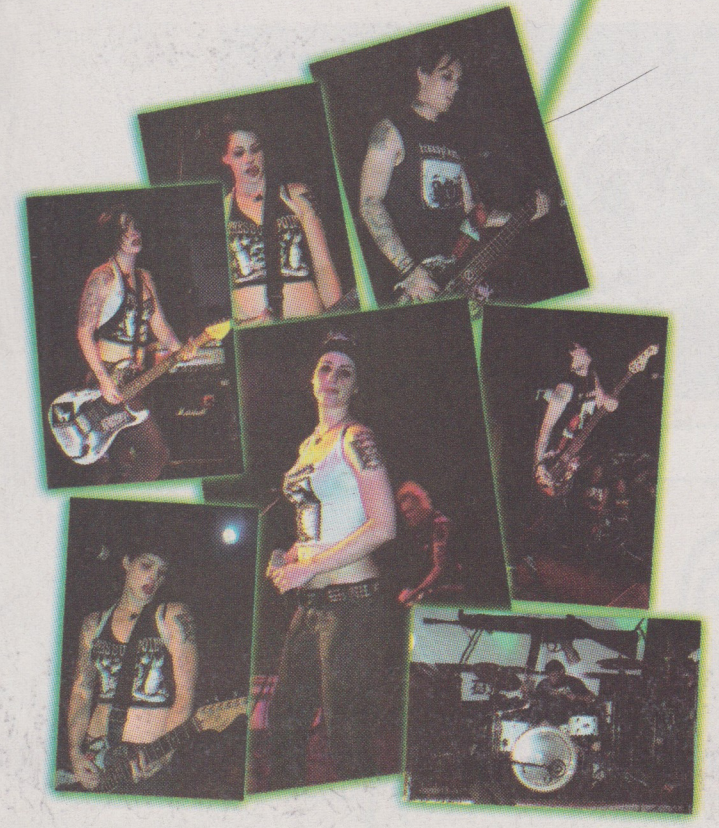
The Transplants Distillers and Pressure Point

at the Roxy
July 27th '02
photos by Mike Moriatis
www.socalscene.net



THE GRAFF PAGE

words and photos by m. young

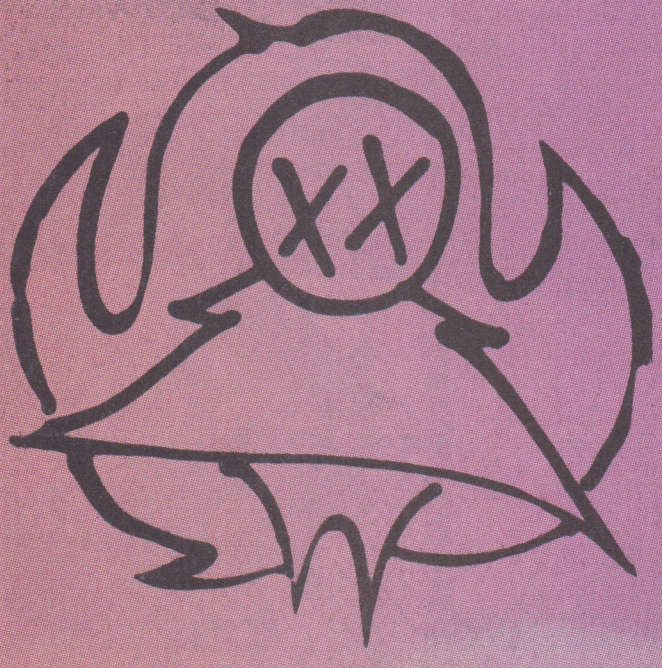
This monthly section is about showing inside perspectives into the controversial world of graffiti art. The concept that graffiti is actually art is a hard one for most people to grasp. Art seems to be the most forgotten about thing in our contemporary society and these subversive artists are voicing their opposition with their graffiti pieces. Instead of settling for the more sedate forms of art these select few perceive the urban landscape as their canvas and gallery. The Graff Page encourages you to send in graffiti related photos and stories because we want to hear more about the crazy graffiti night life.

Memorial to NACE
by MAYHEM

KOLIK

ROBSE

CHIEF
San Francisco

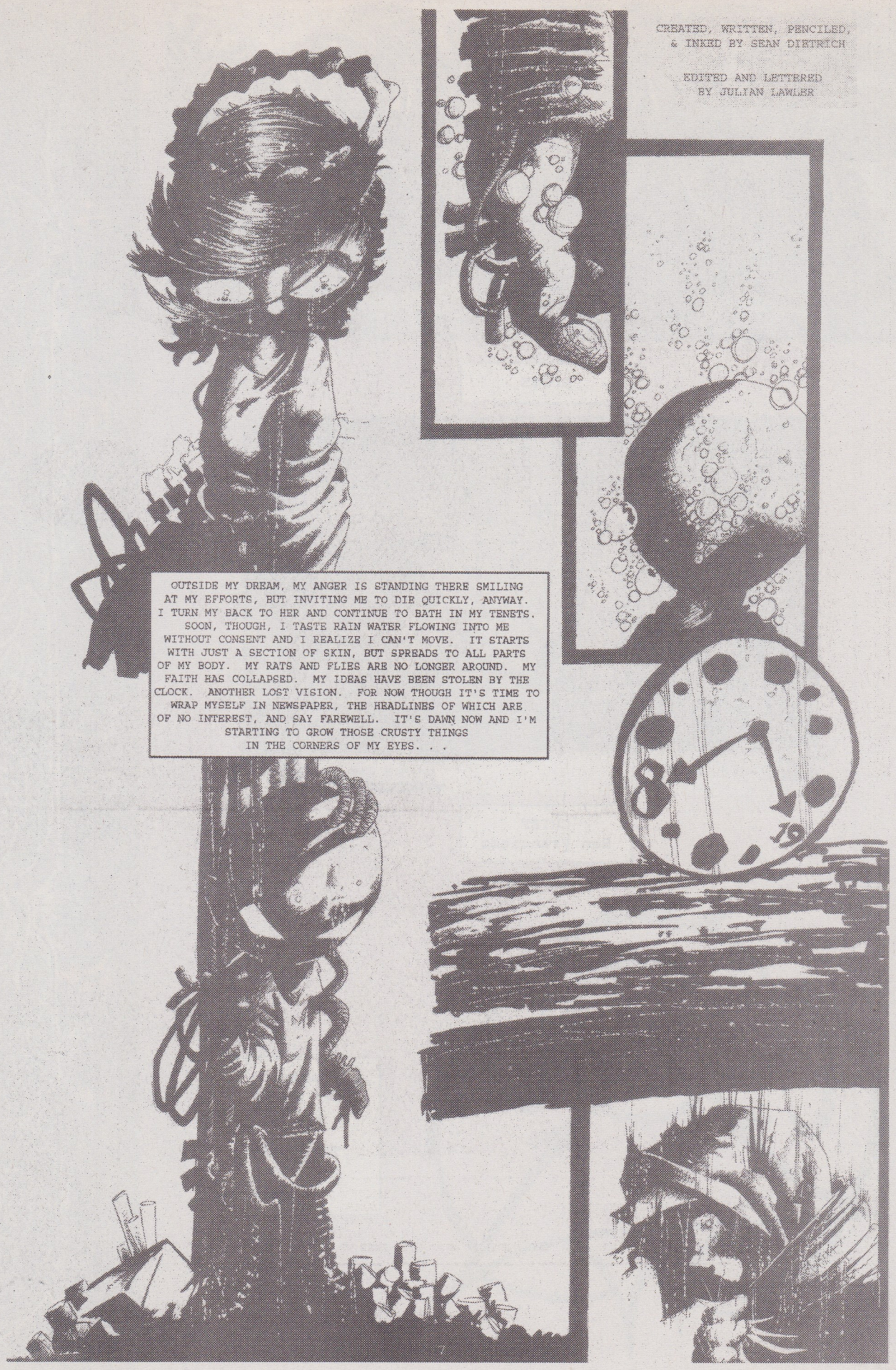


Character
by SLUTS
(left)

TOYS FEAR
LORDS
(right)

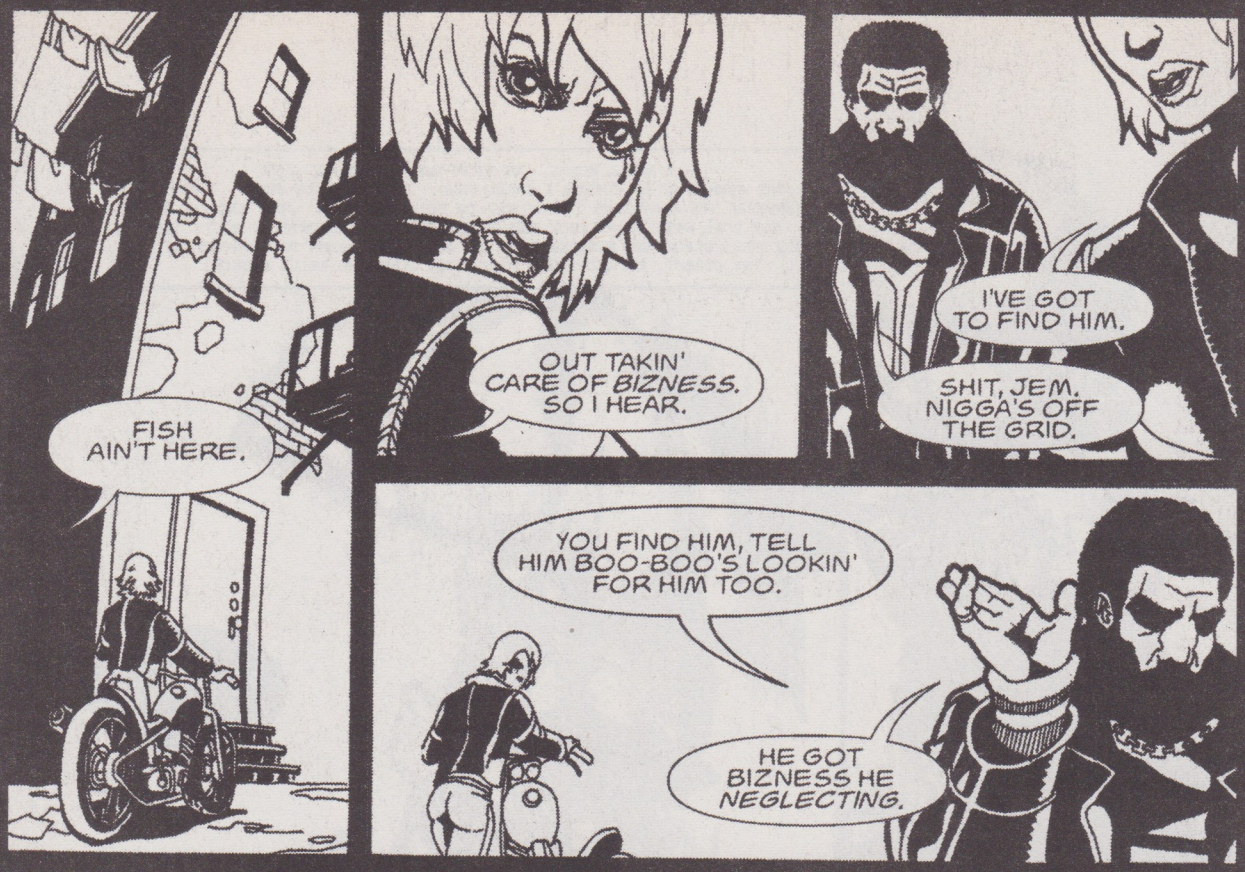
CREATED, WRITTEN, PENCILED,
& INKED BY SEAN DIETRICH

EDITED AND LETTERED
BY JULIAN LAWLER



I SMELL WORMS. UP FROM THE GROUND AND OVER THE STENCH OF MY COFFEE I SMELL THEM. THOUSANDS OF THEM. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I JUST SAT IN THE OPEN RAIN. JUST SAT AND FELT THE COOL WATER DOWN FROM THE OPEN FIRMAMENT AND ONTO MY BODY. MY CLOTHES, BLACK AND STAINED FROM OIL AND WASTE, SEEM TO WASH OUT ON TO THE STREET, MY SHIRT NOW FORTY FEET LONG AND STILL FLOWING.
PRESENT TIME
CAFE · LANE
OPEN
I'M A MESS. I STINK. I KNOW IT. BUT DON'T REALLY CARE. I SIT IN THE OPEN ACCEPTING CONSEQUENCES FOR DOING SO; TAKING IN ALL THIS WATER AND WATCHING MY STAINS GO DOWN THE SEWER. I'M ENJOYING COFFEE, FEELING HOW WARM IT IS INSIDE OF ME, AND HALFWAY CONTEMPLATING MY NEXT MOVE. HALFWAY WONDERING WHAT WILL KEEP ME GOING.

powderburn © lonny chant & steve dandois
www.hollowpointstudio.com



Sunday Morning Coming Down

a POWDERburn story

created by Lonny Chant story by Steve Dandois art by Lonny Chant

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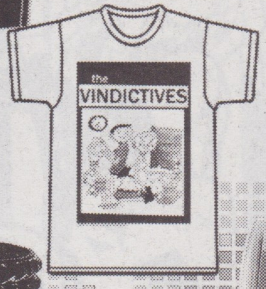

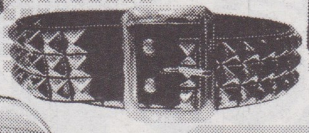
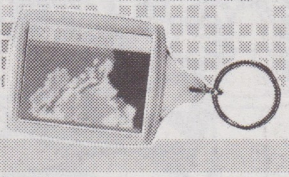

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travoltas imported romanian pop-rock

an interview by Thomas Maxwell

For those of you reading this article on the pot, I feel you; I do it sometimes too. Reading just makes things a little bit easier. They say that a quarter of all males die while taking a shit, so don't force it. After all, you'll get to read a little more about this great band from the Netherlands - Travoltas. Who are they? A sixties influenced surf rock style band with hints of the Ramones, Beach Boys, and Weezer. Their songs, if you can imagine what they sound like, are very poppy and catchy. I found myself singing along after just one spin.

Now I know you're thinking: "heard it, this band is jumping on the bandwagon" (pun intended), but Travoltas has been around for about ten years. They have a five disc history with a whole host of EPs and compilations under their belts to show for a decade of hard work. Surprisingly, Travoltas is finishing up their first major US tour ever! This is pretty amazing when you consider they have played for crowds as large as 50,000 closer to home (in Europe dummy). Hey, when you're independent, you're independent to the core. One thing Travoltas assured me is that they do not aspire to be middle-aged clef chinned actors. Here's what Perry (lead singer) and Vince (lead guitarist) had to say a day before they left America for their French tour.

Tom: Do you guys think that punk music is on the right track or do you think it is kind of faltering? Where do you see American punk compared to European and what you guys see on a daily basis?
Vince: There are a couple of good bands in Italy. There's a big punk rock scene. The best thing is now a days is that punk rock scenes are shattered and splintered up into emo, Ramones kind of punk, California or West Coast punk. I would love to see people just drop all the boring and that and just go to see punk rock shows because it's basically all coming down to pop guitars and nice melodies.

Do you guys see yourself in that mix?
Perry: I don't think so, we've been original for quite a while already and like I said we just created our own sound and we kind of feel comfortable in a team with a Ramones kind of band or a more poppy band. We play with all kinds of bands, we play with fast bands, we play with emo bands and it's all going great so I would just love to see that broken down and all the boring to be broken down.

Who's going to be the next band who's going to blow everybody's mind. You know what I mean? A lot of times that's not the band that's the biggest thing at the time, a lot of times it's the band that true listeners of music are like, wow, this band is really incredible and just fall in love with them and can't stop listening to them.
Vince: There's this one band from Sweden. We took them on our European tour last year and they're called Caesar's Palace and they're kind of like the best known secret of Sweden. You know everybody is falling in love with The Hives and all kind of bands of Scandanavia, but this band is one of the best I've heard in years, like maybe ten years and is really one of my favorite bands. I would love to see them being the next big thing, but I don't know if it's going to happen.
Perry: You might have heard of another band from Pasadena called Arlo.I love their CD, it's very good. We played a show with them and they're really catchy.

Perry, what do you think about your future? Do you see yourselves staying on the same track?
Perry: Yeah, I think we're going to keep doing this for a couple of albums because we created this style that we feel comfortable with, but maybe we could get a little bit louder, maybe we can get a little bit poppier I don't know, we just do what we want. That's what ever we think is good for us and is good to listen to.

What would you guys say is the difference between playing a show here in the United States and over seas?
Vince: It's not that different. Of course the concerts are bigger in Europe, but if you see the reaction that people have to our music it's basically the same. You see happy faces, people are dancing or jumping around or what ever. I think that's one good thing we have that we have the same effect everywhere.

It doesn't matter what the size of the crowd is it's just...
Perry: We could play for ten people or we could play for ten thousand people. Of course, it's more flattering to play and it's better for your ego to play for ten thousand people, but you could have a huge party with ten people as well as long as you just do your own stuff and try to be good at it
Vince: Try to be happy with what you are doing. So doing it for other reasons than having fun is probably going to be very disappointing when you are playing for ten people, but we've been having so much fun on this tour and playing our new stuff

What do you guys think of Liv Tyler (there's a song devoted to her on their new album "Endless Summer")?
Vince: Heh, that's Perry's department.
Perry: I think she is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen.

Would you like to bang her?
Perry: What did you just say about Liv Tyler? Laughs.

So did you guys get a chance to surf while you were in the U.S.?
Vince: Well actually today somebody offer for us to go to the beach and borrow their boards, but we had so much shit to take care of. I think we will be surfing in France as soon as we get there.

You guys are going straight to France to do another tour or what?
Perry: We have like five days off and then our European tour starts.

Do you guys have any closing thoughts or anything?
Perry: Closing thoughts. Hmm...
Vince: Yeah, I got one thing to say, just enjoy life and just do what you got to do and listen to Travoltas a lot!!

Do you guys want to give a plug to the website?
Vince: Oh yeah, www.travoltas.com ever changing and always interesting. You can leave a message and if you want to send us email we always answer email personally.

Just one more thing, I noticed you guys are only on independent stuff right now. Do you see yourselves moving towards having your stuff stocked in independent record stores all over the US?
Perry: That's the plan yeah. We're going to try get the music out to the people in as many ways as possible. We want to try to keep the label thing as independent as possible, but we sure as hell want to make sure people will be able to buy stuff.

Ok guys, thanks a lot and see you in 2003.
V & P: Thank you too, see you then.

LIZ ORTEGA INTERVIEWS DAVE JAMES OF THE

SUPERBEES

The SuperBees is probably one of the most electrifying rock acts LA has to offer. There is never a dull moment when you're at a SuperBees' show-it's all about great rock n roll and having a wild and crazy time. That's why their theme song "Loose," which is featured in the debut album High Volume on Acetate Records, makes that assumption a reality. Singer/Guitarist Dave James and the rest of the SuperBees, have been pounding the streets of LA for quite some time now and continue to thrust their musical prowess in our faces. This is garage rock n roll at it's finest and no matter where you live or what you're into, you'll always find a huge part of your body shaking and moving to the SuperBees' unruly rock n roll styling. I recently spoke with founding member, guitar player, and singer-songwriter, Dave James, about all the on goings of the SuperBees.

Liz: So, Mr. Dave James, are the Super Bees just playing locally or will you be hitting various states?
Dave: We will be. We're going out to Chicago, Detroit, New York, Cleveland, and probably Philadelphia in October. We play in San Francisco pretty frequently--so yeah, we're out and about.

Are you guy originally from Los Angeles?
I'm originally from Los Angeles but I moved up to Northern California. I lived in Chico and San Francisco and came back to LA in the early 90s. Scott, the other guitar player, is from Flint, MI and Dat is from Vietnam. Johnny if from Idaho.

You're the founding member of the Super Bees, right?
Yes, I started the band back in late '93 with another drummer, bass player and guitar player. Then in 94-95, I got Dat, our bass player in the band. It has basically been me and him since mid to late '95. The band has been off and on since then. It just started to pick up again about a year and a half ago with Johnny and Scott in the band. I'd say me and Dat are the original members.

Before the Super Bees, what were you doing as far as music is concerned?
Before the Super Bees, I played in a band called the Comatones around town and just little things. I was really young and I messed around a bit. I also played in a band called the Sacred Hearts, which was former members of the Zeros.

Oh, with Javier Escovedo! (Older sibling of Mario Escovedo of the Dragons.)
Yeah, I played with Javier--it was a really fun, good band. They were more straight ahead rock n roll. It was Stones-type of stuff.

Is 60s-70's rock a huge influence or did you draw from other styles of music?
I've always liked 70s punk rock and late 60s electric blues and garage rock. But I listened to a lot of punk and a lot of garage. Even some mod music, that type of stuff. I liked the Detroit sound--I've always been into that.

Did you always see yourself involved in music while growing up? Was it your "calling" in life?
Yeah, I wanted to play in bands. I was basically in and out of bands...kind of been around bands since I was 13. The first time I played out was when I was 15 and it was with a hardcore punk band. Our influences were Minor Threat and really fast, heavy stuff like that.

Are you the man behind the songs? The lyricist, if you will?
Ninety-nine point nine percent! We do a couple covers and then Scott has recently introduced a couple of his songs, which is refreshing for me. It gives me a little break. He's a good song-writer and a good singer. A lot of the Super Bees material has been a lot of music that I wrote. Lately, we've been collaborating a lot more...Dat will come in with a good bass line and we feed off that and come up with something. Scott will come in with a song idea or I'll come in with something. We just start playing around and before you know it, we have a new song. We kind of work with it and put our input in...the stuff you're going to be hearing off the new record is stuff that I had written within the last few years. Dat co-wrote some of it, too.

And this is High Volume, your debut on Acetate Records, right? What other record labels have you released material with?
Yes. We put out a cd and a 7in on a record label called Cabeza de Tornado Records out of Huntington Beach. That came out a couple years ago, prior to the Las Vegas Shakedown that we played at. That was good--it was great packaging and it sounded pretty decent. It was a like a pre-cursor demo of what we sound like and what we're all about. Before that, we put out a couple things on Pelado Records out of Orange County. Some stuff on various compilations.

How was the Las Vegas Shakedown? Are they still doing it?
That was an amazing weekend. There was a lot of bands, a lot of good people and a whole lot of booze! It was a lot of people just getting loosed and crazy...it was fun. I thought we were great! (Laughs) There is a band called the Gimmicks from Seattle--they were amazing. Flash Express, I heard was great. The Demonics from San Francisco was the very first band to go on and they put on a good show. There was numerous bands--it's hard to say who was the best. It's all a blur. They didn't stop doing it. They did one last year but it didn't do so well. They got banned from the hotel that they were doing this in. So, they had to do it in a different venue and it just didn't work out for a lot of people. So, [promoters] are working right now to get another venue and we'll be going out there in February for the Shakedown--in a different venue and a different hotel.

So, no freaky accidents, like the Weaklings? No face disfiguration going on with beer bottles? No blood?
Um, I blew up the amp. Half way through the set, it went completely out. We were the only band credited to blow up the sound system on stage. That was kind of cool.

What exactly makes a good song? What do you incorporate into your songs?
Basically, it really depends what frame of mind you're in. Some are very personal and others are just a get up and go type of songs. You know, get loose!

What is "Loose" about anyway? Cheap women?
"Loose" is probably one of the first songs...it's about being judged for going out and having a good time. At the time when I wrote that, I was getting kind of crazy and getting into certain things and stuff like that. It's just a song about this is who I am and accept it. The lyrics are pretty self explanatory.

Are you still engaging in those "certain things" or have you mellowed out?
No, I'm more focused now. I was never out of control, as far as doing drugs or anything.

Do you plan to keep working in music for the years to come? What do you do for a living?
I plan on playing music as long as my fingers and my heat allows me to, basically. I plan on doing it for many years. Whether or not I'll be in a loud rock n roll band in twenty years, I don't know about that. But I'll definitely be playing guitar. I have a day job which I hate to wake up to...I test aeronautical, I'm somewhat of an engineer. We test a lot of parts that go into jet airplanes and rockets and stuff like that. I test all the parts before they put them up into space. Mainly a lot of aerospace industry products. I do this because I enjoy doing it--there's no real big ulterior motive to do anything other than it makes me feel good to do this.

So, do you have any material for the next album?
(Laughs) We have so much new material, basically this album was supposed to be out February and we were supposed to have our second album out pretty soon, but it's taken so long. We actually have a stock pile of material that's ready to go on a second album, we just need to get into the studio and record it. We're definitely anticipating going into the recording of the second album. We have something else coming out shortly on a label called Sonic Fever, it's a subsidiary of Fuct Records. It's a 4-song EP and that should be out real soon. Definitely look for that. Officially, the Acetate release of High Volume should be on the 3rd of September. Officially-that's what they say. But to get back to the question, we are definitely ready to do a second album.

When you're on stage, playing in front of an audience, what gives you the drive to perform so well?
Mainly, the volume of the amplifiers!

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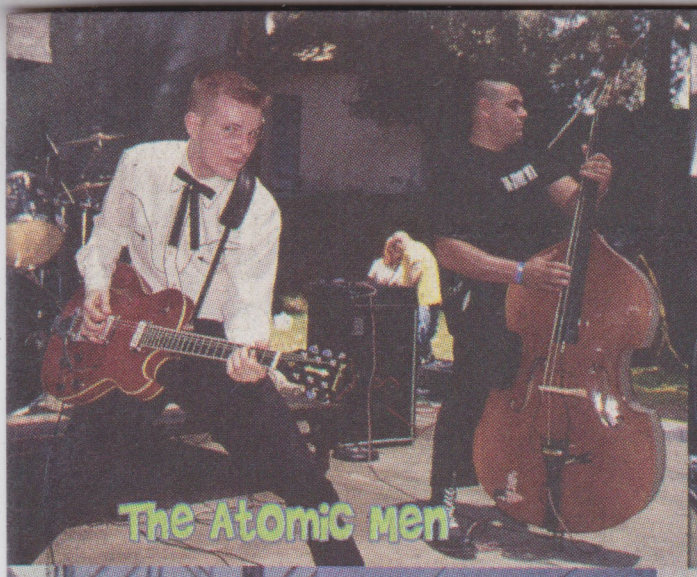
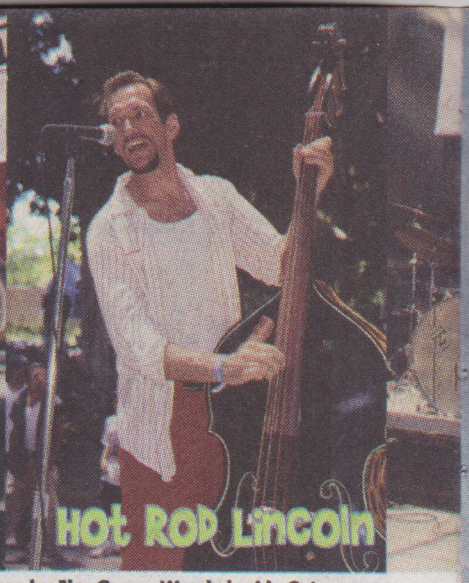
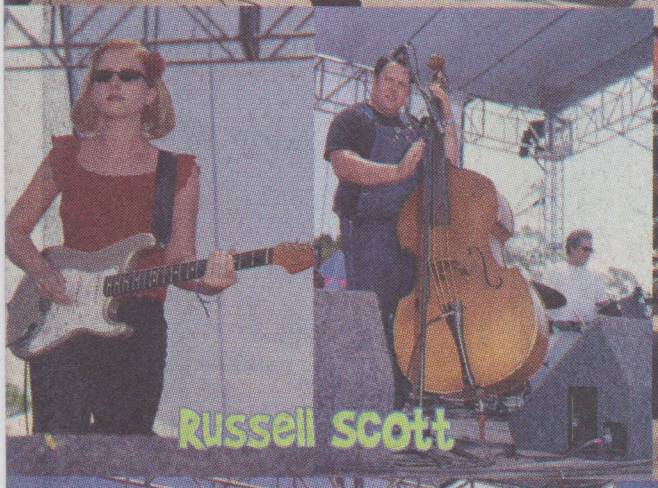


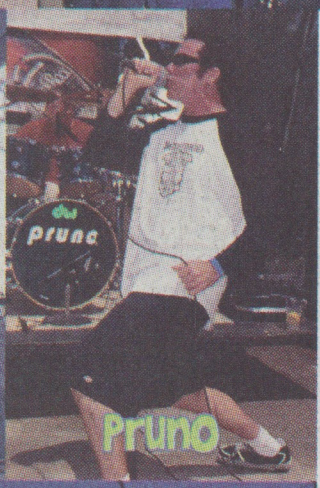
The Atomic Men



Hot Rod Lincoln



Russell Scott



Pruno

Pictures by Jim Gray - Words by Liz Ortega

The moment I set foot in the Hidden Valley Ranch in Irvine, CA, my eyes were immediately drawn to the beautiful ladies--and boy, were these ladies a sight! Some of you will agree that stilettos, mini skirts, and steep grassy hills just don't mix..

Under the excruciating hot sun, many clustered around the main stage as **Nashville Pussy** unleashed the sleaze. Now, this band is extremely foul--I'm talking lewd lyrics, raunchy members, and explicit rock n roll. Nashville Pussy is definitely raw, contagious, and it's rock n roll at its best.

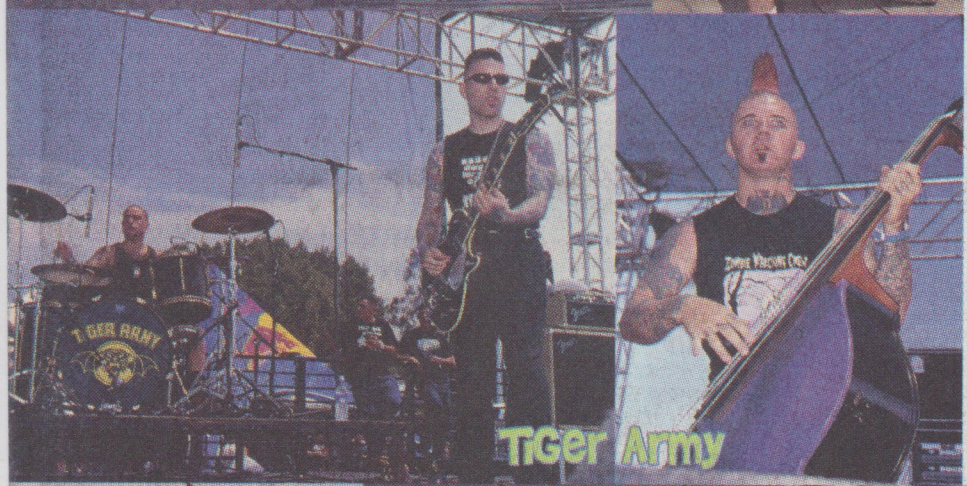
Lee Rocker of the **Stray Cats** took the second main stage--I took the beer line. By the time I got my beer and walked back to catch Lee Rocker's set, it was over. Bummer.

The **Cadillac Tramps** have been a personal favorite for quite some time. They played songs off "It's Alright" (1994) and the widely known "Self Titled" (1987), which can also be found in their "Live" album on BYO Records. As expected, the Tramps delivered a solid performance which could have lasted the entire night.

X prepared themselves on stage and I was giddier than a crackwhore on payday. They played all the classics; "Los Angeles," "White Girl," "Johnny Hit and Run Paulene," and so many other songs, I lost track.

Finally, **Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros** took the stage. They played songs off their Hellcat release, "Rock Art and the X-Ray Style" and also pleased us with a few **Clash** songs. Hands down, the best performance of the night.

The Hootenanny was definitely not worth it this year and because of it, I don't think many will return for the next one. Maybe if they scheduled the festival sometime in the winter, allowed the bands to play longer than 30 minutes, charged a reasonable ticket price, and had a better beer selection, it would be a fuckin' good time.



TGer Army

Cadillac Tramps

Rev. Horton Heat

est. 1957
TAP BEER
Throw Rag
DRL 21Y

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it's a fully blown, nitro guzzlin', piston pumpin' gas...
HOOTENANNY
2002
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REVEREND HORTON HEAT
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LEE ROCKER • NASHVILLE PUSSY • TIGER ARMY
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HOT ROD LINCOLN • 3 BAD JACKS • RUSSELL SCOTT
THROW RAG • RUMBLE KING • JOE WOOD
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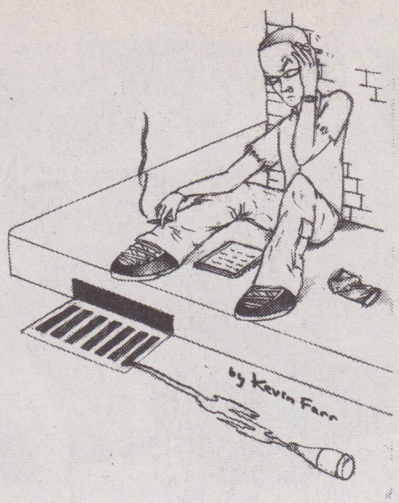
Teknikal Jargon

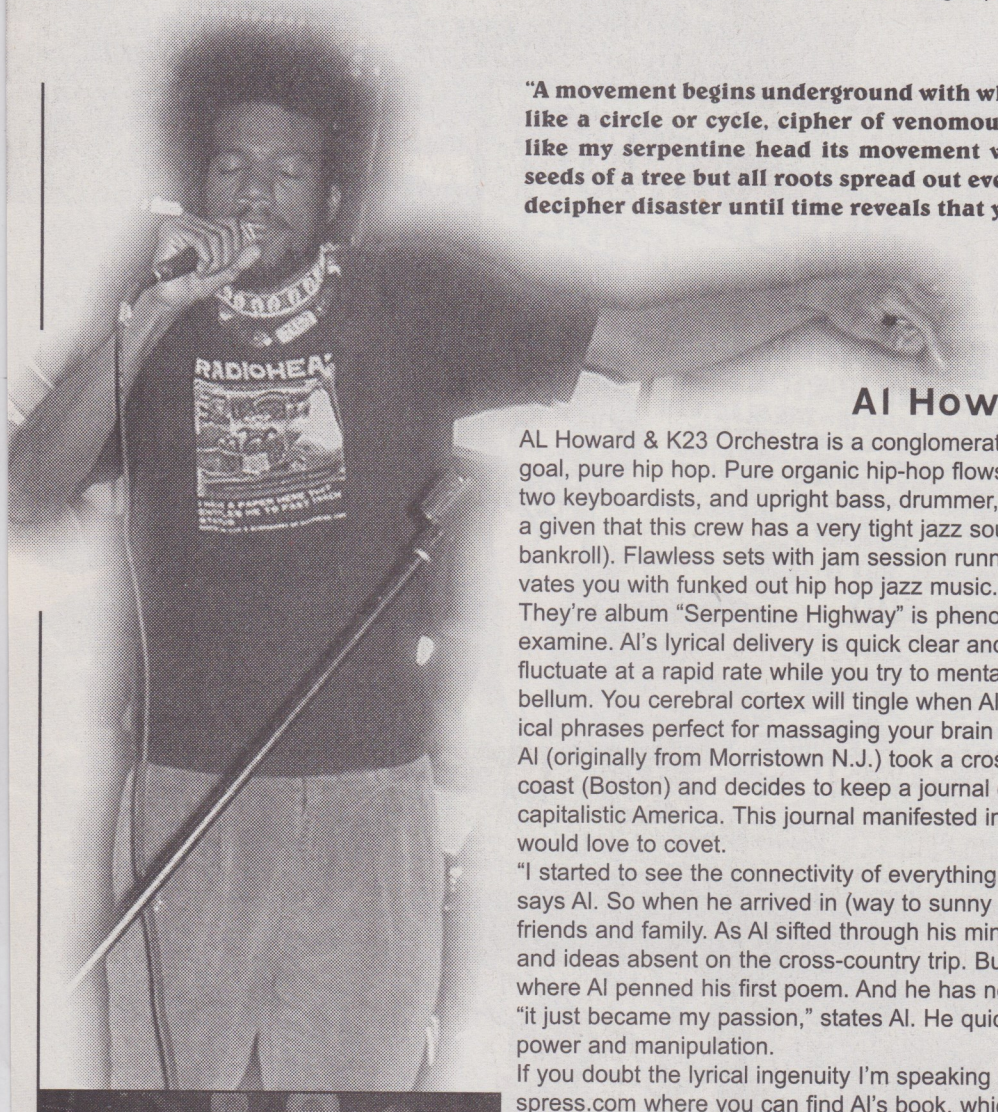
with the Misfits of Hip-Hop



Gab of the Month

"I'm a ruler of my temple what I do to instrumentals is instrumental to the development of these niggas mentals, tears in your eyes like this moment is sentimental. Are you fundamentally flawed or philosophically bored, disturbed like the 8th floor of the hospital ward."

Talib Kweli - "Sound Bombing III" (Rawkus Rords)



"A movement begins underground with whispered sounds and words get around like a circle or cycle, cipher of venomous viper lurks in-between shadows but like my serpentine head its movement will grow. It may begin slow like the seeds of a tree but all roots spread out eventually they begin to move faster and decipher disaster until time reveals that you are your own master." -(Al Howard)

Al Howard & K23 Orchestra

AL Howard & K23 Orchestra is a conglomerate of musicians collaborating on one coming goal, pure hip hop. Pure organic hip-hop flows like civ from the souls of these spirits. With two keyboardists, and upright bass, drummer, percussionists, guitarists and saxophonist it's a given that this crew has a very tight jazz sound. When I say tight I mean tight (like my bankroll). Flawless sets with jam session running up to 15 minutes, where the band elevates you with funked out hip hop jazz music.

They're album "Serpentine Highway" is phenomenal in all aspects one would wish to examine. Al's lyrical delivery is quick clear and intellectually stimulating. Your neurons will fluctuate at a rapid rate while you try to mentally digest the words he lays upon your cerebellum. You cerebral cortex will tingle when Al spits more then 50 bars a minute of methodical phrases perfect for massaging your brain into an altered state of consciousness.

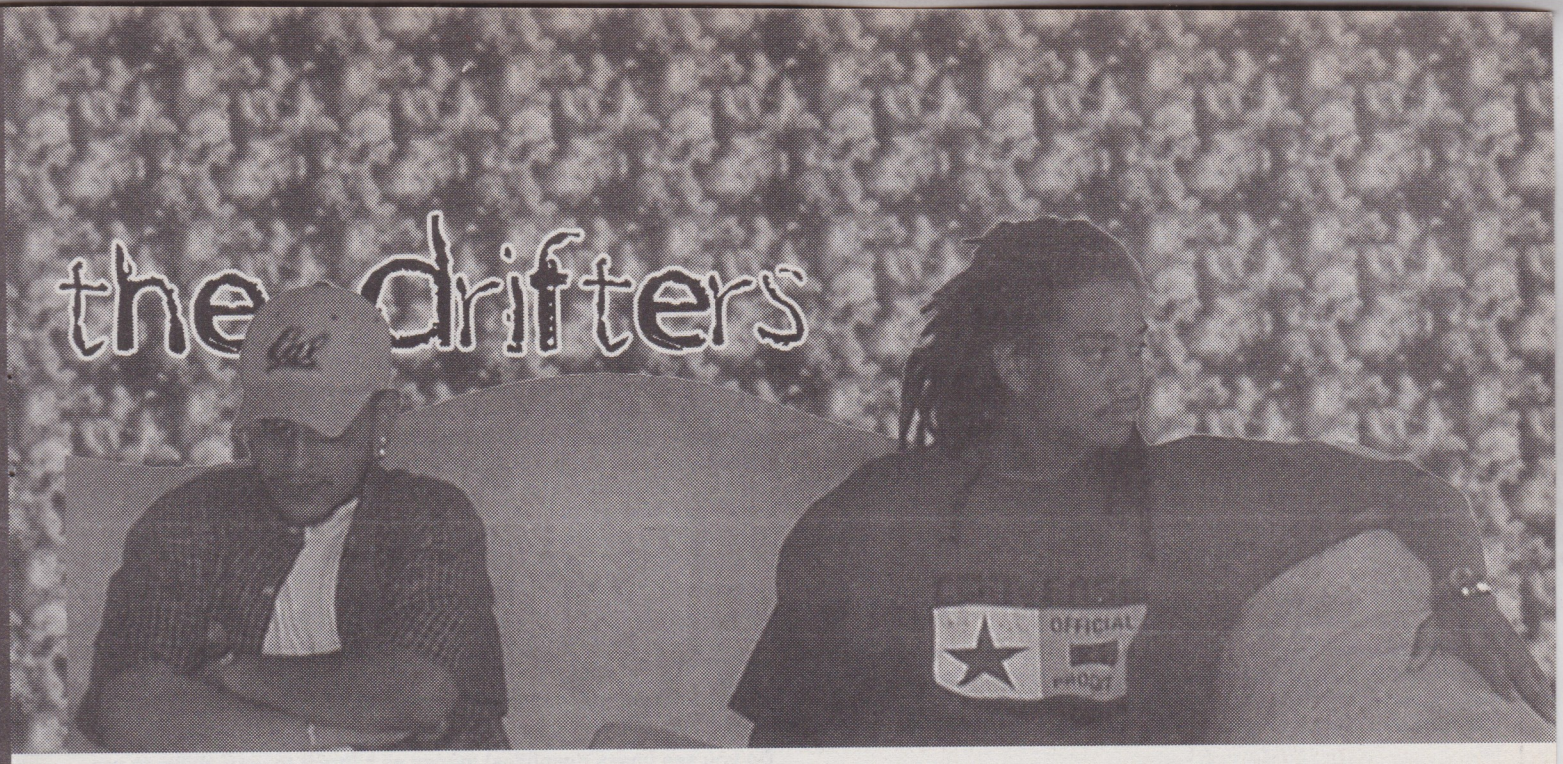
Al (originally from Morristown N.J.) took a cross-country venture originating from the east coast (Boston) and decides to keep a journal of the madness he encounters in our beloved capitalistic America. This journal manifested into a style of poetry many fake ass MC's would love to covet.

"I started to see the connectivity of everything so I just started writing everything down" says Al. So when he arrived in (way to sunny Cali) he decided to write a book for his friends and family. As Al sifted through his mind the experience began to unveil thoughts and ideas absent on the cross-country trip. But it was greyhound bus in New Orleans where Al penned his first poem. And he has never ceased to let the ink personify his ideas, "it just became my passion," states Al. He quickly understood his natural gift for word power and manipulation.

If you doubt the lyrical ingenuity I'm speaking of you need only to visit www.alteredstatespress.com where you can find Al's book, which is currently on presale. You can marinate on the blissful sounds of the k23 Orchestra by downloading tracks from the site. Al Howard & K23 Orchestras album "Serpentine Highway" is soundtrack to Al's book. Both book and CD separate and as whole entity are exceptional forms art and culture necessary to anyone's CD or book collection.

You can also catch the crew rock at spots such as Galooka's in La Jolla, Winston's in OB and Blind Melons in PB. To locate CD's, upcoming shows or Al's book contact threedays63@hotmail.com or www.alterdstates.com.

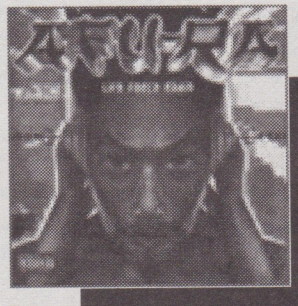
Underground self-produced music is the heart that pumps the blood through the veins of our existence. Get up and go get a transfusion of pure genius work.

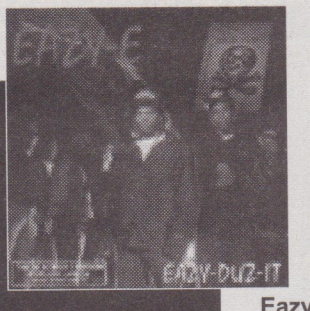


I-Sight Records Halloween Release

"It's all about the spitting," exclaims Azmah as he refers to the lyrical content of his new album with Switch Griffens. Dropping on the day of the dead is fitting for what Azmah calls, "not your average album". Azmah and Switch are two members of the independently produced crew known as InTheVisualz. For all you cats unaware of InTheVisualz you need only to hear one track and you'll know what's up. (www.inthevisualz.com).

As Azmah and I spoke, I got the impression that The Drifters is a finely calculated mixture of live instruments and digital beats intertwined with straight to the dome rhymes. With production from heads like Z.G.S., J Won, Dialextc, CyperOptics and Dialtone it's no wonder Switch and Azmah focused on spitting for this album. Expect some local touring to promote The Drifters, I guarantee they'll fuck your cranium up with an evening of linguistically knowledgeable rhymes.





Fresh Classic

AFU-RA
"Life Force Radio"
(KOOCH RECORDS)

"Afu-Ra's" "Life Force Radio" blesses the ears with eloquent flows and superior notes. DJ Premier beats keep you off your feet while Afu-Ra keeps your mind starving for his words. An album so comprehensive and exquisite "Life Force Radio" reiterates the ever-present consent that Hip Hop is not dead. I am truly at a loss for the ability to define how powerful and influential this album is. Afu-Ra at age 28 has mastered the art of diction, pronunciation and a little fiction to produce some of the illist rhymes being written on paper. "Life Force Radio" further supports my theory that Brooklyn's got something in their water. This boro holds it down in the arena of lyricists. This BK has had guest appearances from headz such as GURU, Bobby Digi and The Human Ochestra. You know a MC line up like that is gonna be some hard shit!

Eazy E
"Eazy Duz It"
(RUTHLESS RECORDS)

Eazy E, hum what do say about this ghetto fool? Let me start off by stating I am not typically enthralled by gansta rap. A track has got to be really hard for me to acknowledge its presence especially when ti gets polluted by redundant lines about guns, girls and crack. But Eazy Duz it is hard enough for me recognized it, in fact this disc is so fucking hard it shits iron nuggets on must thugged out albums popping today. The samples are primo, with flawless producing from Yella and Dre. Each track comes served with Eazy's timeless lyrically raunchy, rhythmically tight rhymes. Not only is Eazy superb with the words, this cat is funny. He knows how take on trip, he captures hip hop in it's purest form, story telling. Granted some of his stories are about Sharon and her friend, but wouldn't we all like to tell stories about our threesome experiences with fine African women with beautiful voluptuous asses. This album has left indelible imprints on many of today's rappers. One spin of the album and you'll see where rappers like Kurupt got schooled. This album s more then a classic, it's benchmark of clever rhymes and old school NWA break beats blended with old flavor dug from depths of the crates.

POVERTY

Upon opening the Poverty press kit I read, "Poverty is a 23 year old white rapper…" which is what I call cheap marketing appeal for the mindless masses to digest. With preconceived notions on the intent this statement I set the pres kit to the side. I figured it was just another cracker with no rhythm trying to spit rhymes so a shit label could prosper of Eminems' leftovers.

But upon removing my head from my rectal cavity I learned that Artist Direct Records is Founded and owned by Tom Fields (go look it up if you don't know who he is) and that Poverty posses a passion for the gift of gab which he manifests through his brutally honest rhymes. With the album due in November and spot on the Lyricists Lounge Tour I went to investigate the lyrical ingenuity of the once impoverished MC.

Do you think you blew up quick (in the sense that your on lyricists lounge your working Eric Sermon, Alchemist)?

To be honest I don't even look at it like that. I'm me so I don't even know how people perceive me. I know in my head that I'm not even blown up yet you know. I can't really answer that I'm trying to roll with the punches and work with what ever is given to me. I feel like I've earned everything I've gotten so far.

What's your impression of hip-hop today as whole entity now that your in the industry?

When any person gets in the music business after they dreamed it, it's like a dream until you get on the inside of it and realize it's a business. And that aspect gets you kinda shook but the thing is that since I've been in this rap game I've learned a lot stuff. I learned how people do everything with a business brain and the thinking is how are we gonna make money. My whole thing is that I refuse to abide by that, I don't really care if I don't sell records as long as I was me. I don't want to change to sell record, if I don't sell records it's cool, if I do it's beautiful.

Are you aspiring for the mainstream audience or looking to keep your shit a little quieter?

I don't think you can really decide that, I don't think any act can decide that. You just put out your product and if only a couple hundred thousand people love your shit then you become an underground rapper. If a couple of million people like your shit now all of a sudden your main stream.

Do you feel that your race is used for marketing and to bring awareness to your flow?

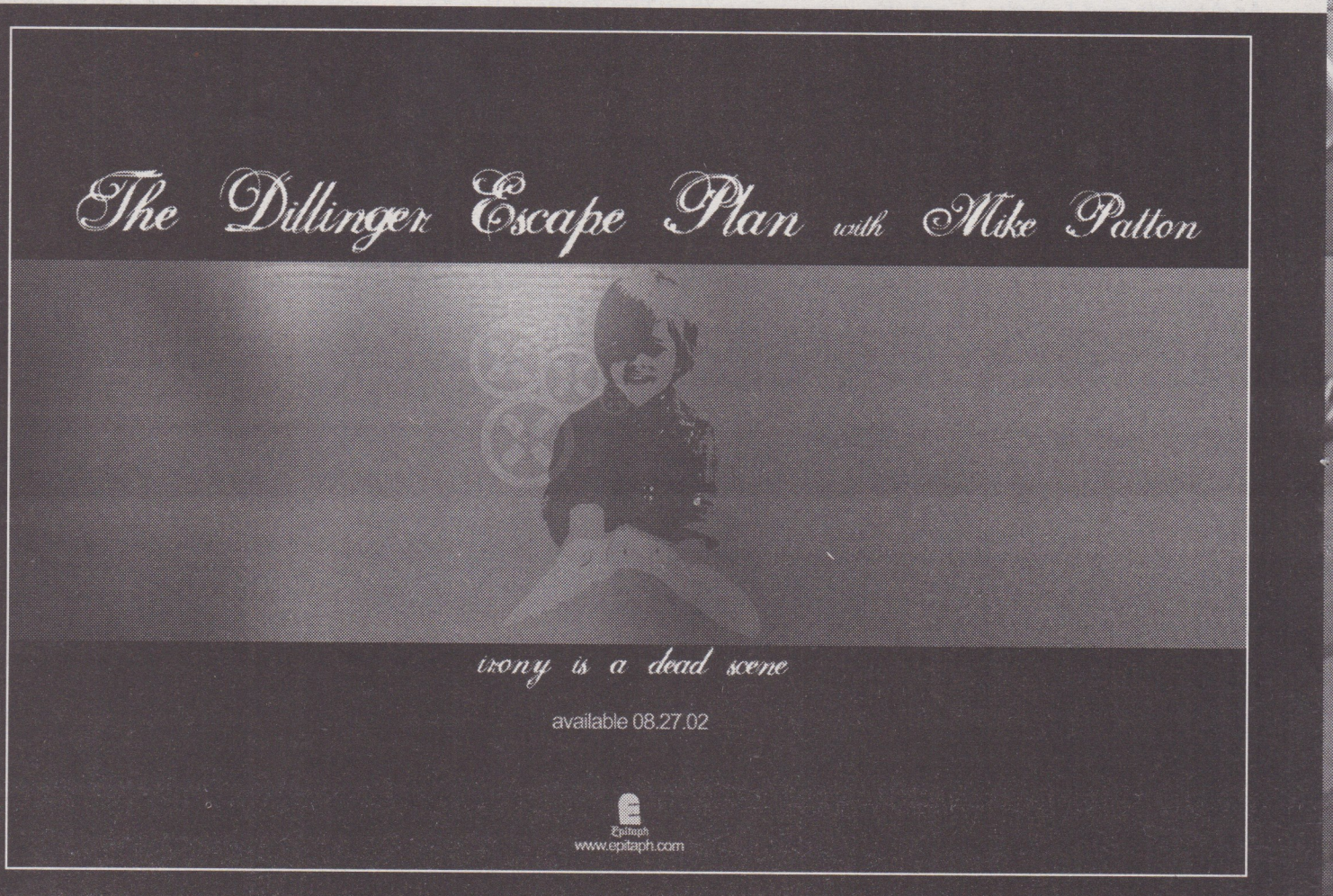
Actually, no I don't. The thing I love about my label is that Ted Fields wanted to sign me before he even knew I was white. I know that I'm not some white rapper that got signed because Eminems the big thing, you know what I'm saying. I was signed because a guy heard my music and loved it. It had nothing to do with white or gimmicks or marketing. This label doesn't expect me to blow up and be the biggest thing since sliced bread. This label wants to take my sound and what I'm doin and represent it to the world I don't represent just white people I represent people in general, I don't give a damn who you are. I represent people who come from struggle that's what I'm all about. Because I lived in it for 13 straight fuckin years and I don't like the fact that people blow up and they think that everything is ok now because I have Mercedes Benz. When the true mission is to say, Ok I have a Mercedes Benz but there are still a million fucking people out there who still live the life that I lived.

Would you ever get into doing endorsement?

Um, I guess, (pause) sure.

Do you see (mass quantities) money as a threat to your ability to produce true hip-hop and stimulating lyrics?

I don't think that will ever happen to me because my life sucks. No matta how much money I get, No matta how many houses or cars that I own life just keeps dealing me bullshit. Like I got a record deal and my mother died on me like a month later. And then everything started to go good again and I got a nice car and stuff started to happen and then my sister's husband killed himself. It's like one thing after another. I watch everyone around me suffer and die of AIDS, crack, heroin, fucking prostituting the fucking streets. It kills me, know matter how much money I have it kills me.



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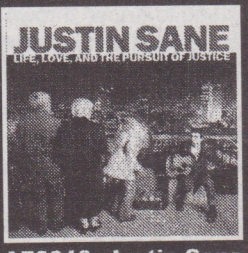

AF0018 Justin Sane
"Life, Love, and the Pursuit of Justice"

thirty-two frames is inspired by what it hates.

Apathy is the enemy. Even their name is taken as a warning call against the media. Wrapped in a proto-punk rocking shell, it's all about the lyrics. Says singer Jay Palumbo, "I won't do it unless I have a socially conscious message of some sort." The motivations are sincere and the promise with this unit is their almost reactionary approach to being in a band and using it as a voice. "The ability to mess with as many people as possible. To have a weapon against all the apathetic bastards I see out there." is the well stated motivation behind the bands destiny, captured for the first time for public viewing in their self-titled release. Hard core Elliot fans might remember Jay as their old guitarist, and Elliot singer Kevin Ratterman shares engineering credits on this thirty-two frames disk. With a VERY cool cover of Tom Petty's "I Need to Know" thrown in, it's decent score. Curious as to the lyrical drive behind thirty-two frames, I was able to get some time with singer Jay Palumbo.

Not to start this out talking about another band (even though I am) Are you related to Daryl Palumbo of Glassjaw? (They were on last months cover and I've never heard that last name before, and here's another one.)

Jay: No. He's from New York though I think.

I thought maybe you had mob connections up there or something.

I have Mob connections but I'm dissociated with that side of the family. That's the dark path.

Mob associations from Louisville Kentucky?

No. I grew up in Detroit. A much harder town.

What brought you to Louisville from Detroit?

Atmosphere more than anything. I was suffocating in Detroit and people from Louisville had a completely different sense to them. I've actually enjoyed living there.

You are a former Elliot guitarist.

Correct. Up until April 2000.

So thirty-two frames is obviously a newer band.

It's just what poured out after all that. After I quit Elliot. The band is just a few of us getting together and just playing whatever comes out. It's not anything planned or predetermined or set. It's not like, what flag I want to be carrying at all. It's just kind of something that happened.

thirty-two frames? (Isn't 32 frames the minimum frames per second something has to be to fool the human eye into thinking its fluid motion?)

32 Frames is the speed of film. It has to do with basically the thought put into television and commercialism. About how bought into that life we are. It's just turned us away completely of the

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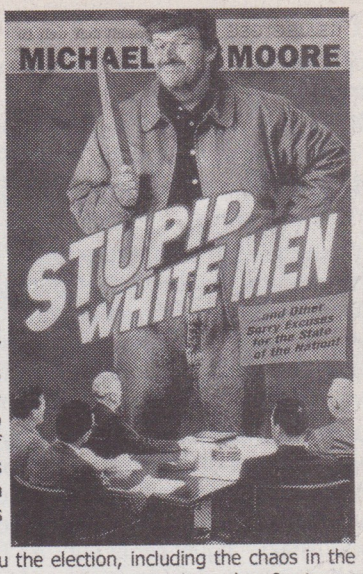
Book: Stupid White men
Author: Michael Moore
Released: 2001
By: ReganBooks
Review By: PR
Quick Summary:



What an excellent read! I've actually read this book twice; once to read, and the second to make sure I didn't miss anything. Michael Moore, for those who aren't familiar with him, is a conservative author/writer/director most famous for his movie, "Roger and Me," where he stalks General Motors CEO Roger Smith, trying to confront him about why GM laid off so many people in the small town of Flint, MI., ruining its economy. It's an entertaining flick, and worth a look. This book, however, is Michael's second and, by far, the best. Michael takes the reader thru the election, including the chaos in the voting system,his stance on Bush, and just about everything else. Quotes:

On George W. Bush: "The thief-in-chief. A trespasser on federal land, a squatter in the oval office. Send in the marines!"

On Bill Clinton: "One of the best Republican presidents we've ever had."

On America: A friggin' stair on a blue dress. That's what captured our attention in the nineties - along with slow-moving Bronco's, six-year-old strangled beauty queens and Hugh Grant's dating habits.

Sometimes Michael goes way left but for the most part, this is at least something worth reading and will give you an idea of just how mad Michael Moore is.

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opposite of the direction that we were heading before. It's like money cohersions got involved. And they got psychologists together and figured out a way to get control that defines us by a certain means that works. It's effective.

So you take your name from something you almost despise?
Yeah. It's almost a warning call.

If I control the past, if the future mine to own? Can I rewrite History any way I want? (Quoting lines from "Saints Stolen")
(laughs - in fake English accent) 'Of course silly boy'. Yes yes yes. Depending on perspective. It's what you see. If you don't believe it, then you are right. And if you do, then you're right. It's just a view I have about the way the world is presented to you.

Only one vocalist is credited (Jay), but there are great shouted dynamics of backing vocals on the self-titled EP.
Yeah, I didn't know a bunch of it. I didn't really go in with lyrics. I went in with a few keynotes and did most of it stream of consciousness. It just came out. So I don't remember a whole lot. Suffering from good bout of insomnia. This isn't a very planned thing. It wasn't a very thought out meticulous process. It's more of an inspired project. Just musician friends who just came together and belting out a little frustration. Letting it go as loose as possible but still make it sound halfway decent and listenable.

How come, there are 6 songs credited on the jacket, but lyrics for 7 songs, and I'm counting 8 actual songs on the CD.
Exactly.

What kind of tricky shit is that?
That's not tricky, that's giving you more. We threw extra stuff on there just to get it out. What are we gonna do? Hold on to it? We just went in and recorded a bunch of songs. What do you do? You pick the best ones and put them on there. And you are left with all his refuge. So if you are bored at the end, well there's a few more moments of entertainment at the end.

This is your first, self-titled release on Revelation. How did you end up on that label?
I guess because I had a smash hit with Elliot and moved lots of units (laughs). I don't know. I guess just lucky. We sent something in and they said yes.

If I'm not saying anything it's not worth it. If I'm singing love songs then it's pointless. Then I need to stop and sing on my back porch to myself.

You play guitar and sing. Is that because you wanted to be the singer, or is it cause you couldn't find a singer to fill the slot.
It's just because I was the only one there to take the mantle. I can rant for hours. I guess the only reason, more than the music, if I'm not saying anything it's not worth it. If I'm singing love songs then it's pointless. Then I need to stop and sing on my back porch to myself. I want to bring across a social consciousness message of some sort. I won't do it unless I have a socially conscious message of some sort where people can discuss and learn, ignore, whatever. At least it's there. At least I've done it. I've tried. Apathy is so dangerous.

Do you enjoy being 'frontman'?
Oh yeah. I can act like a complete fool. And it's very exquisite.

What's got your goat lately? Made you upset enough to actually take action.
I found that taking action, as far as protest and all that, by and whole has not worked very well. At all. The people that you are protesting against have pretty much figured out most means of how to stop you or dissuade what you are trying to do. So I've been planning my manifesto with something different. A new tactic to get through. Our weapons as a people, as if we are frustrated or discontent are very limited. There's not much left that we can do without being squashed. So I got to think of a new way of going about all this.

Motivations and goals?
Ability to mess with as many people as possible. To have a weapon against all the apathetic bastards I see out there. I want to see some reaction. I want to see somebody want to do something more than stand around with crossed arms. I don't want anyone to music. I just want them to listen and get something. Just something to wake people up and slap them around.

So where is you head at on stage when you are playing live?
To be a channel for any kind of knowledge up to this. What little I have to find like-minds, find people ideas. Formulate something. I don't trust computers. I don't trust computers at all. I'm living out in the back woods of Kentucky. I want to see if there are still people alive that care about situations, who have ideas, who have any kind of thoughts about better ways of living.

What do you care about truly?
Right now my main concern is giving people one last shot. Seeing what's left of humanity. I've always been a Tolkien fan. When the Lord of the Rings came out, the movie, really hits home with the message of 'who will be left to be the ring bearer. Who will be the one to actually fight for what needs to be fought for.' Where the people stand up.

You give away some of your songs on the Internet. What do you think of file sharing?
I don't care. Music... once you get it out there, once you release it, in my head, its pretty much public domain. If you are performing, you are a performing artist. I'm not in it to make a living off it so I don't care who has it personally.

For what would you be willing to stand in a line for an hour?
To fight the president.

Like in a boxing match?
Yes yes yes.

What would the winner get?
I don't have to win. It's just to do it. To show a little love coming from the poor underclass.

What's the last mistake you made?
That's a good one. Puts a spotlight on myself. I guess for being quiet for so damn long. As far as what we are talking about, it's got me thinking about not giving it enough. I put out a rickety little self-titled EP... and the self-indulgence is overwhelming me right now just thinking about it. We didn't do enough man, we didn't put enough time into it. We should have made it truly worthy, something that would have really gotten across. We downplayed it. It's way to subtle. I regret not putting more time and effort into it and make it something that people wake up their mind to it. I champion mediocrity on that one. I could have done much better. I apologize.

What can the average kid do to make the world a better place?
Oh my god. Start reading. Pick up books. Television is just gonna tell you everything you don't need to know. Just start reading. Pick up books on something you don't understand and go from there.

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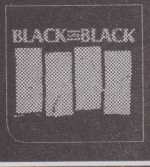

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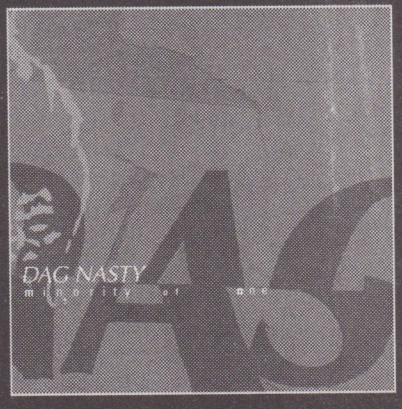

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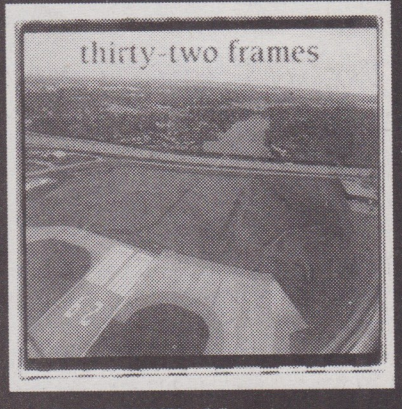

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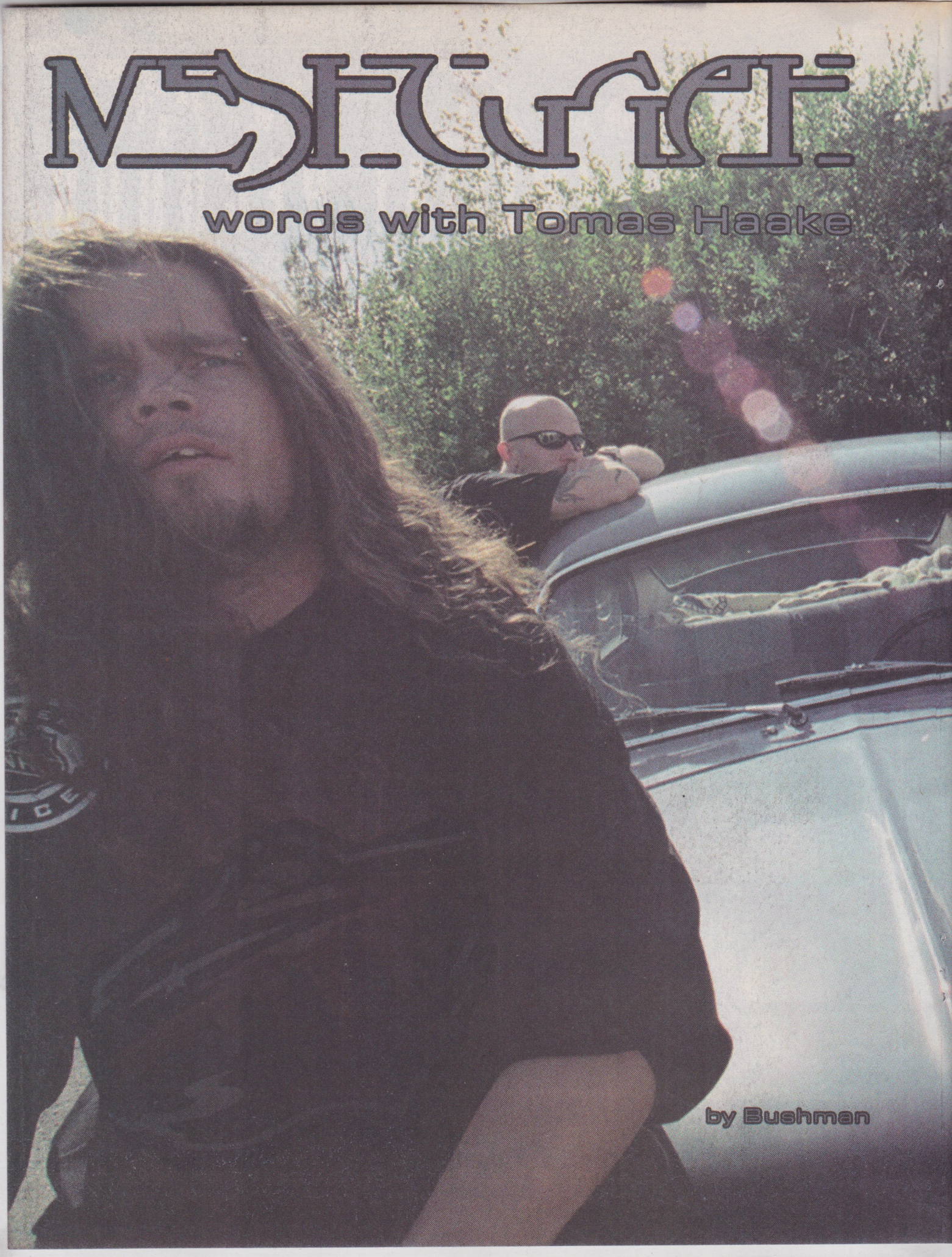
MESHUGGAH

words with Tomas Haake



by Buchman

It's brutally mechanic. Polyrhythmic explorations of industrialized metal. 15 years in the forge makes it surgically precise. Bred in the land of Vikings, its ferocity is unparralled. A deconstruction of the system through an attack of sound. A jagged scar of vocals battle against impossible time shifts of machine gun guitars and a percussive element that is controlled chaos. Meshuggah continually earn the 'progressive' that precedes the word 'metal'. Despite the NWOCSB (New Wave Of Crappy Swedish Bands), Sweden has blessed the world with Meshuggah. Metal so ferocious, it was used as a weapon by young Jack Osbourne to launch an auditory assault on his neighbors. A newly released album called "Nothing" delivers another crushing blow of metal for the masses. And with a slot on this years Ozzfest, Meshuggah add a much needed dose of credibility to the lineup.

The two most dynamic aspects of the band are the apocalyptic lyrics, and the multi-rhythmic drums.

Tomas Haake is responsible for both.

MESHUGGAH INTERVIEW

Meshuggah was formed in the city of Umeå in 1987. Going on 15 years later, what has allowed you to maintain focus and keep going with Meshuggah as a band?

Thomas Haake: It's really hard to answer. We've never been that kind of a band that had any fights or any grudges. Anything. We are kind of in love with each other, you could say that. In a manner. So it's never been much of a hassle, so it's never been a problem to stay together for a long time. But also, then again, we haven't been that kind of a touring band for a lot of years. We started touring in '94 or '95. So there were a lot of years where we didn't do much touring, and a lot of touring really adds a lot of stress to any band. Definitely. It's hard to say, but as a band, we are all happy how our music comes out and that people actually appreciate it.

Interesting writing dynamic to Meshuggah. Tomas writes the words, but Jens sings them.

Tomas: That's pretty much it.

Is there any conflict in that process? Does Jens ever say, 'Fuck, that. I'm not singing that'. Or does he ever feel the need to contribute lyrically.

There's usually never a problem word wise. As to him saying 'No I won't say that because you are saying this in a lyric'. It could be we have to change how the actual lyric is added toward the riff part of the song. You have to keep somewhat of a focus on that. You want the vocals to be kind of straight. Not too complex rhythmically. But still you have to be contrary to some of the strokes that are in the actual riffing or drum playing. He's not as fluent in English as I am, so sometimes, some words can be kind of tricky.

I don't hear any accent in you at all.

Me and Marten (Rhythm guitar) are pretty much like that.

'Polyrhythmic' is a term I've heard used to describe the Meshuggah feel. As a drummer, you are responsible for much of that. Where does the drive to create such intense precision come from?

It's just something that's evolved. It's not something we think about, deliberately try to make songs hard or difficult to play or intricate or anything. This is the kind of music we find intriguing to play and it just comes out this way. It's not only me coming up with the rhythmic parts, its even more so guitars than me. They actually program the drums, to at least 75%, I usually play the drums they way they programmed them. That's how we make the songs. They program drums and samplers and all that. Then they come up to me and go 'Hey, I want you to play like this' and I go, 'Oh thanks a lot man. I appreciate that. Let me just hide in cellar with a drum set for a few years and I'll get back to you.' But I write a lot of the rhythmic parts to. But it's really no problem nowadays. They way we write the music comes very natural nowadays because we've been together for so long a time. Usually it's not too much training to get into new stuff either.

Your drums often have a large crashing, and almost garbage can like smack mixed in with the more recognizable drum kit sounds.

I was wanting to get some more of those trash sounds in there. So I used stacked cymbals. Like crashes on top of chinas (types of cymbals) to have a different kind of high hat so to speak. And for some songs, it really enhances the feel of the song. And it enhances the brutality of it.

It gives the percussion a very unique sound, and in the world of metal, that's a rare commodity for a band have a sound that you can recognize, whether you have this particular song or not. I think Meshuggah has attained that level.

I think so too. That's also what we are aiming at. We are very keen on still keeping that. This album is a lot slower and not as in your face like 'Choasphere'. It has some drop downs where it has some calmer parts. It's a lot heavier. The overall beats per minute is a lot lower than 'Choasphere'. But to us, and to me, you can still definitely hear Meshuggah. That's one of the main things we strive at. Also what shaped the approach for the new album and took us into how it ended up, began with the 8-string guitars (a standard guitar has six) that we are using for this album. They have a low string so they play in unison with the same exact note with the bass. So the guitar playing is a lot different in this album from the earlier ones. 'Choasphere' and 'Destroy, Erase, Improve' it's a lot about staccato powerchord riffing. Playing together with the bass drum. Now the drum style is pretty much similar to what I was playing before. But the guitar parts are very different. With that low string, you can't really play that staccato powerchord thing, but they are really good single strings that do a lot of bends. That gave the album a more sinister feel.

Do you write lyrics in your native tongue and then translate to English?

I write in English. That's probably another reason I don't have much of an accent either. Usually, overall, Swedish people like guys my age or younger are very very good at English. We don't dub any movies or anything like that. We have all the sitcoms that you have here. I'd say it's like 70% of Swedish television is actually in English. That's what we grew up with. We started learning English in 3rd grade.

American Television will teach you English.

Yeah it does actually. And I started reading books in English when I 13 or 14. And for the last 10 years, I'd prefer to read a book in English. If it's an English writer, I'd prefer not to have it translated because they always fuck it up. So most books I read are in English so I guess that helps to.

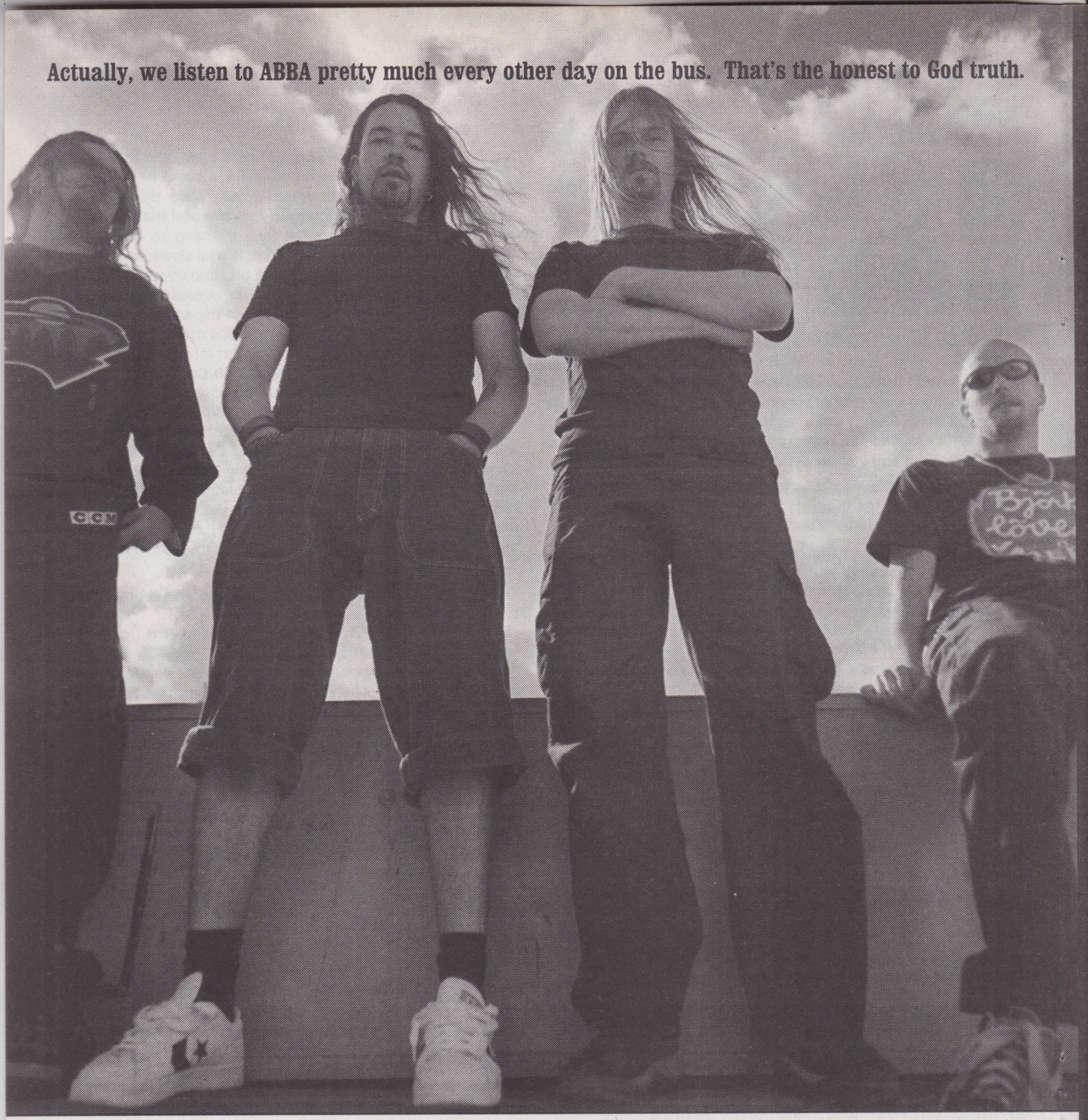
We aren't people that wake up in leather pants and go brush their teeth with blood first thing the morning.

I saw the video for "new millennium cyanide Christ" off of the Rare Trax release,

(laughs)

Shot in with two takes (one at night and one during the day) where the band basically 'air-jammed' their performance for the entire song while riding in their tour bus along some highway in Ohio. Jens is singing into a pen. The rest of the band is just pretending they have instruments, but faithfully jam the whole song. Who thought of that? Shows a sense of humor to the band that might not be found within their music.

That came out of pure boredom man. That was when we were out in 99 with Slayer. We didn't even have a tour bus. We were driving this shitty old RV with a trailer. We were driving ourselves



pretty much. We had a tour manager that was driving during the video shoot. We were just bored and we had one of these hell drives. Like two days straight without a gig. So we just wanted to kill some time. We had a video camera on the RV. We thought, 'Fuck it. Let's force some people to headbang.' On the fast clips, we were supposed to have those in the video. But the fast cut up shit in the beginning is Patrick's video. You can see us go into gas stations and make people working there headbang. Like homeless people, make them headbang. It was really silly. But we cut that out of the video. We thought it turned out even better with just us air-playing the whole fucking video through.

I've turned at least two people onto you guys by showing them that video. I think it shows a sense of humor that doesn't really come across in your music.

Some people ask us why we do that. Why do you want to put Rare Trax out, and being silly and stuff like that. We are definitely serious about our full-length albums. But at the same time, we don't' mind, or actually prefer to show fans that we aren't people that wake up in leather pants and go brush their teeth with blood the first thing the morning. We kind of want to show ourselves that the way we are to, with a more jovial nature.

What was the environment like in Sweden for a new metal band when you first started out?
The first few years that I was in the band were pretty cool. In the early 90's, in Sweden, especially up in Umea, there was strong metal thing going. It's not a big city, like 100,000. But it was a decent metal crowd up there. But in '93 and '94, then the hardcore wave started hitting hard and metal kind of dropped out a bit. We've never really had like a big metal thing going in Sweden. But somehow we've always been able to play a lot in Sweden. There are always a lot of people it seems to come and see our shows.

So what's Sweden 2002 like?
All over Europe right now, you still have that big wave of like 80's power metal thing going. So right now we don't really feel like we fit in too good in Europe. And we haven't felt that for years. There's definitely a place for us there, but it's not like there's a big thing about bands that play like hard metal. Some bands are able to make it down in Germany even though they are a harder band. But Germany is the biggest market in Europe and Germany is all about 80's powermetal. That wave is still going so strong it's fucking ridiculous. So right now, we feel that we fit in a lot better in the US compared to Europe and we sell a lot more albums in the US. So our focus right now is more on the US, but we are definitely going to do an extensive European tour for this album. But our main market is the US.

Did you have access to a lot of music when you were growing up?
Yeah. No problem. Actually in our hometown where we grew up, there was a couple of music stores that would sell anything. You could get anything from the up and coming bands. Like during the early and mid 80's, when the Metallica wave hit real hard, you could get any kind of fucking band you wanted. So there's never really been any lack of access like that.

I was looking at Umea on the map, and it gives the impression that's its just way the hell up there in the middle of nowhere.
It is definitely. It's also a student town. There's a big fucking university. The average age there is kind of low. It's around like 28-30 is like the average of the whole city. So it's a really young city. The city has like 30,000 University students coming in every year. So that's a lot of young kids.

So you got a lot of college girlies coming in each year.
Eeeah-yep. Walking the city there is pretty fucking hard. You need to just focus on the ground or something because they are usually real fucking beautiful.

Was your tour with Slayer the first time Meshuggah made it to the US?
That wasn't the first time, but it was the first proper tour that we did. The first time the year before when we played the Milwaukee Metal Fest. We played like New York, we did a headlining show there. We played Springfield, MA and then another show with Cannibal Corpse. A really odd setup actually. But the second time we came around was with Slayer.

Were you surprised by the amount of recognition and number of fans the band has in the US?
On the Slayer tour we were pretty fucking stunned. I mean the crowd is there to see Slayer, but they are used to hard metal. So I guess in that matter, it wasn't too strange for us. But the way I remember it, the crowds for that tour were just amazing and they really got into what we were doing.

Did lots of people recognize you from the scene in the Osbournes where young Jack uses your music to assault his neighbors with a track from "Destroy, Erase, Improve"?
I think he plays the song 'Soul Burn'. I don't notice anything different because he played that song. But I would guess, probably, what got us on this (Ozzfest) tour might have had something to do with him. But we don't really care about that. I mean, if he's a fan, so all right, that's cool.

I don't think anyone could ever say Meshuggah didn't earn their way onto Ozzfest. Especially looking at the lineup. Have you seen their TV show?
I've seen the show, but not that episode.

Do you like the idea that your music can be used to assault people of a weaker musical constitution?
Yes. Absolutely.

Opinions of reality TV?
Sweden has all these fucking shows now to. I don't watch any one of them. I haven't actually seen The Osbournes on MTV, but my first cousin tapes all the shows and gives me videocassettes of it. And that's hilarious. I just laugh. That family's pretty fucked up. But otherwise, I don't watch any of that. It's just too much man. All these fucking shows. What's that one called? The one with the big tits that married the old man.

Anna Nicole Smith.
I heard something that she was going to do something like that.

I just saw that show for the first time the other night. She is so whacked out on pills... she's just got to be. If she's not on drugs I truly pity her if she is that fucking stupid.
(much laughs) I don't really like that whole reality TV idea.

What other countries embrace Meshuggah well?
Some smaller countries like Switzerland and Italy. We do pretty good in sales in those odd kind of countries. Music like ours, any kind of metal, basically, in Europe, is supposed to do best in Germany of course. Sweden is ok.

Got any old ABBA albums in there?
Oh yeah.

Is that required listening in Sweden?
Hell yeah. Definitely.

It's like government issued there?
Actually, we listen to ABBA pretty much every other day on the bus. That's the honest to god truth. We play all old Swedish stuff. I fucking grew up with Elvis and ABBA.

What was your first favorite band?
Elvis Presley. When I was 5 years old, I'd be sitting there like playing cookie jars with my hands like listening to Elvis Presley. I knew all the lyrics. I mean, I thought I knew all the lyrics. I was just kind of forming my mouth to kind of similar to what I though that I heard from him. So if you stood outside and listened, it pretty much sounded like I knew the actual lyrics to. I had it down even though I had no idea what he was saying.

What was your first heavy metal show you got to see live?
That would have been Motorhead when I was like 12. Fuck, I was shaking. I was scared. Around 11 or 12, that's when I first started listening to harder rock like Black Sabbath, Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. From then on of course we went on to the Slayer and Metallica and that kind of thing. But that was during the first period that you just kind of notice that there's this wicked fucking music out there. And then you go to see Motorhead live and you have no fucking idea it would be so loud. The guys seem so fucking brutal.

Where there the usual pitfalls of drugs, alcohol and violence our American teens indulge in?
Sweden has changed dramatically. When I was a kid, if there was a murder anywhere in Sweden, it was all over the papers everywhere. Nowadays, it's just as common as here I guess. Drugs of course had entered Sweden on a big scale even back then. But nowadays, Sweden is pretty much like any country. A really high crime rate, a lot of drugs, a lot of prostitution. It's not a big difference from any other country I'd say.

I notice the attitudes towards recreational drugs in Sweden are quite tolerant. I read there was a clinic in Sweden where heroin addicts get a prescription and inject the drug. The heroin (cost) is significantly less. There's not the need to commit the crime to be able to pay for the heroin. The heroin is clean. The needle is clean. The product is a given product. There is no overdose. There is no hepatitis B and no AIDS. They seem to think that's a pretty good way to keep a thumb on the problem.
Yeah it is. I think Holland is the one that is responsible for bringing this thinking into the system. Holland has been like that for a long time. It's funny, but it's real scary to. Back in '95 we toured with Machinehead in Europe and we did this show in Rotterdam in Holland. I woke up at like 6 in the morning cause I heard all these voices outside the bus. I looked out, and there was this line like a mile long line. You couldn't see the end of it. And they were all lining up for the blood bus where they get like free syringes and shit. And they were all mumbling and whispering like, 'mmmrrrrrrrrrmrrrrrrrrr', like a low murmur. I went outside the bus and just stood there and looked at it like, 'fucking insane, man'.

From living there, is that a good approach? Would you recommend America, with its drug intake, take on those attitudes?
When it comes to distributing free needles that are clean and all that, definitely. And blood buses that run around and check on people's blood to make sure they don't have hepatitis or AIDS or whatever, and they can do that for free. I think that's a good thing. You can't fucking stop the drugs, so you better work with it.

I also read where they are looking to make pot legal, but for only Swedish citizens and avoiding the tourist traffic that the Dutch have attracted.
I haven't heard anything about that. I know the discussion is ongoing.

Do you have many non-musical interests? (Video Games, collections, hobbies?)
I do computer games. Usually like Quake 3, but I don't play a lot of games. Apart from that I like to be on a boat. I like fishing.

Are your ancestors Vikings? (I don't know shit about Sweden).
Hey man, I have no idea. I think probably not because I don't have a Swedish last name. My last name is German, but I don't know if it was taken or my ancestors where actually German. I have no idea. I think don't think anyone in my band knows.

I think that would be cool.
Yeah, it would. Definitely.

You could picks up chicks with that. 'Yeah, my ancestors were Vikings...'
Yeah until they trace you back and find out its not true....heh.

How much did the US music scene influence/affect your culture growing up? (Lots of American TV/Movies?)
Yeah. I think the actual culture, trends, with everything pretty much crossed over to Sweden.

Do you think that was a good influence or bad?
It's both good and bad. As a kid growing up, I definitely appreciated it because that's what you wanted. You wanted more of that kind of thing. Because there wasn't much coming out of Sweden, at least that you could touch or see where you were growing up. All the trends. Like inline, skateboards and all that shit, it always came here. Not only music trends, but other trends. Clothing trends are pretty much similar in Sweden.

When living in Europe, do you get a lot of imported culture from all the other countries that share geographic proximity?
Yeah I'd say. And also we have a lot of immigrants. We are one of the biggest countries in Europe that accept immigrants. So it's a very small, multicultural state we have in Sweden now. I think that's good though. It definitely does bring in more problems, but at the same time, what the fuck do you do? You can't shut out the world.

What's the best thing the Swedish people have contributed to the world? And you can't say ABBA.
Oh man that's hard.

You are representing for your people now.
I hear ya, that's why I'm thinking. We had a bunch of inventors back in the day. Actually, the match is a Swedish thing.

That's pretty damn cool.
Yeah put that. That's fucking badass.

How come all the pictures I see of Umea on the internet make it look all warm and green. Don't tell me it's not cold as fuck there.
During the winter it is.

How long is your winter season?
I would say early November up until beginning of May... late April.

Sounds like Wisconsin.
Yeah I'd say it's pretty much the same as Wisconsin.

And it's cold as fuck there.
Yeah, it's usually real cold. And a lot of fucking snow and all that. But the summer is sweet there though. It never gets too hot or too moist or anything. It's a real dry heat, but it's never even real hot. Like a cool summer day. When if you stand in the shade, you start freezing and then you go out into the sun and it's like, 'awwwww' and you get all warm and fuzzy inside. That's the kind of summers you get there if it's not raining all summer. That happens from time to time.

What's your favorite heavy metal t-shirt?
I don't know if you'd call it a heavy metal t-shirt, but I seen one at the store that was real good and it said, 'Kill the Strokes'. That's a good one.

Funny. I was actually asking what is your favorite t-shirt that you own.
Oh that I wear? That's probably a Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas shirt that I got a couple months back. I traded this guy for a Meshuggah shirt.

Most prized musical possession? (Rare CD, guitar pick, etc.)
That would be a snare drum I built myself. I've been using it every tour. This is the first tour we ever did actually that I'm not using that snare drum as my first. I use it now as a spare. I prefer not bring it out of the box too often. I put like a hundred to two hundred man-hours into it.

Where did the ambition and no-how to build a drum come from?
I went to school as a carpenter. I worked as a carpenter for like four years. With that came the skills and I had the machinery and all that.

YOU CAN'T FUCKING STOP THE DRUGS, SO YOU BETTER WORK WITH IT.

What bands affected your tastes and direction as a musician the most?
Rush. And I think probably Allen Holdsworth. He's an English dude that plays in this fusion kind of jazz, but it's real fucking free form like. That kind of changed my approach at least. So I guess in that manner he meant a lot. But if you really dig into it, as far as bands that blew my mind when I started listening to harder music. Definitely Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Metal Church, Slayer and Metallica and all of that shit. When you are like between 12 and 16 years old, you are so open to everything. That's when you take all that shit in. I guess that's also what we kind of bring in the backpack with us all the time. We don't listen to that much new metal nowadays.

Thoughts on the current state of 'heavy' music.
I wouldn't really want to say anything about it, because we don't really have as much of a grip on the current scene. Overall, what bands are doing what...

Why is that?
It's kind of unfair because we really don't find or hear a lot of interesting music out there. But then again, who am I to say when I'm not really into the scene. I'm not sure what it is, but it would have to be like something really odd to get me really interested in it. Like if I were to go out and buy these new albums. If I could choose, I would really love to be that kind of guy again, when you just keep your eyes peeled all the time just to hear different new shit. But, not that you lose interest in it, but we get so much... we feed off ourselves nowadays for inspiration and for influences even. But for influences, I would say a lot more books and films than actual other bands or other music. And as a creative source, we feed off ourselves a lot more nowadays than we used to. And we write together in a whole different way now. The communication has been completely different on this album. Taking everything step by step and always talked everything through within the band. It didn't always used to be like that. We'd each write a song and we'd all get together and play and if it worked out it worked out. Nowadays we tend to feed more off each other. Musically at least. Lyrics and all that, I take more inspiration from films and books.

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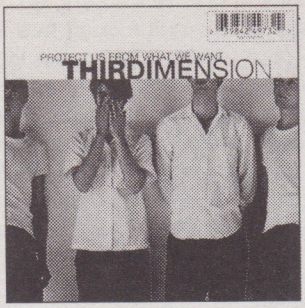

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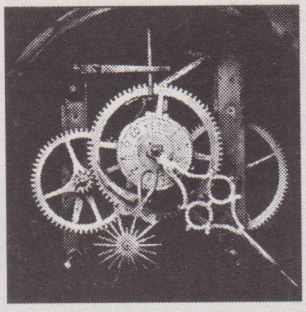

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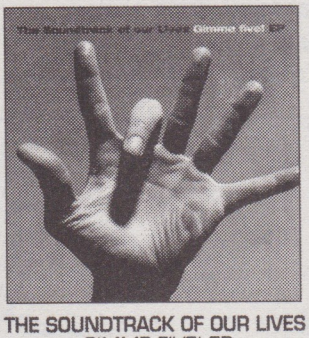

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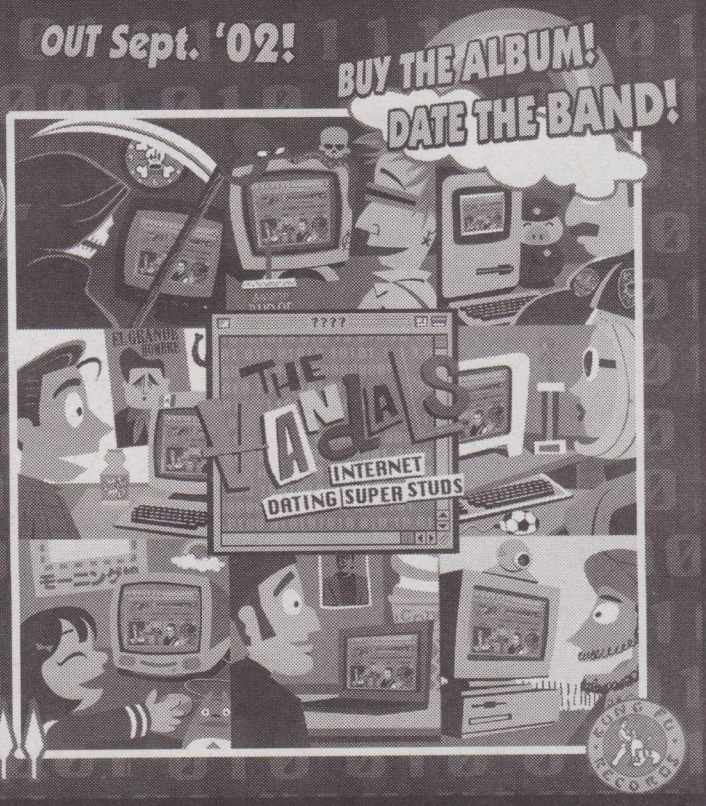

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You are on this years Ozzfest, as one of the top side stage acts. What are your feelings about being on this tour?
It's all good. No matter how you twist and turn it. You hear a lot about how people are disappointed because it's all about nu-metal and all that shit, like too cheesy of bands and all that. But to me, especially this year, it's a pretty fucking good mix. You've got stuff in there to satisfy pretty much everyone. That's what you need to have to pull this kind of thing off. To attract as many people as you can. Like if you narrowed it down to just being like real hard metal, it would have 1/10th the crowd. So I think it's all good.

Any bands that are standout that you've seen so far this tour?
I had no opinion of System of a Down before we went on this tour. But I think they have a very unique thing going and I give them credit for that. They are very different from other bands that I've heard. On the second stage there is a few bands I really dig. Otep is one of them. With the girl singer. Hatebreed and Down for the same reason. It's not actually the music too much for me, but you can just feel it is 100% true. And there's no fucking faking it. They do what they do because this is what they are. So I'd see any of their shows any day man. I really respect those kinds of bands.

Have you hung out with Ozzy?
No. Fuck no. I don't know if anyone can really. (laughs). I'm sure people can, but he has like real tight security.

I suppose now with the TV show, it's gotta be just stupid.
Well we've hung with Robert Trujillo and some of the other guys in the band, but not actually Ozzy.

Lyrically, Meshuggah seem to focus on issues of control, often alluding to very mechanical and sterile imagery. Where does this fear of the system of control come from? (Especially growing up in Sweden).
I don't know man. Depending on what kind of person you are, you just have to flip on the TV and see the news and you get fucking scared man. I'm not really sure though, because as I said, I take a lot of inspiration from not only what's happening around us, like the system issues, those kind of issues are kind of underlying, they are in there even though I don't write it straight out. I have my own thought on it, and I write it in there, but it's not like you can pinpoint it or anything. And that's a way I prefer to keep it. I don't really write it because I want someone to think this or that or feel this or that. I'm actually kind of egotistical like that because when I write the lyrics, I write them for myself more or less. And what they mean to me might mean the same thing to the average listener. But I prefer not to dig too deep into that either because I would prefer to keep it kind of open.

What can the individual do to make the world a better place?
Be true. Be honest. Be honest to yourself. If you are that, it will take you pretty far.

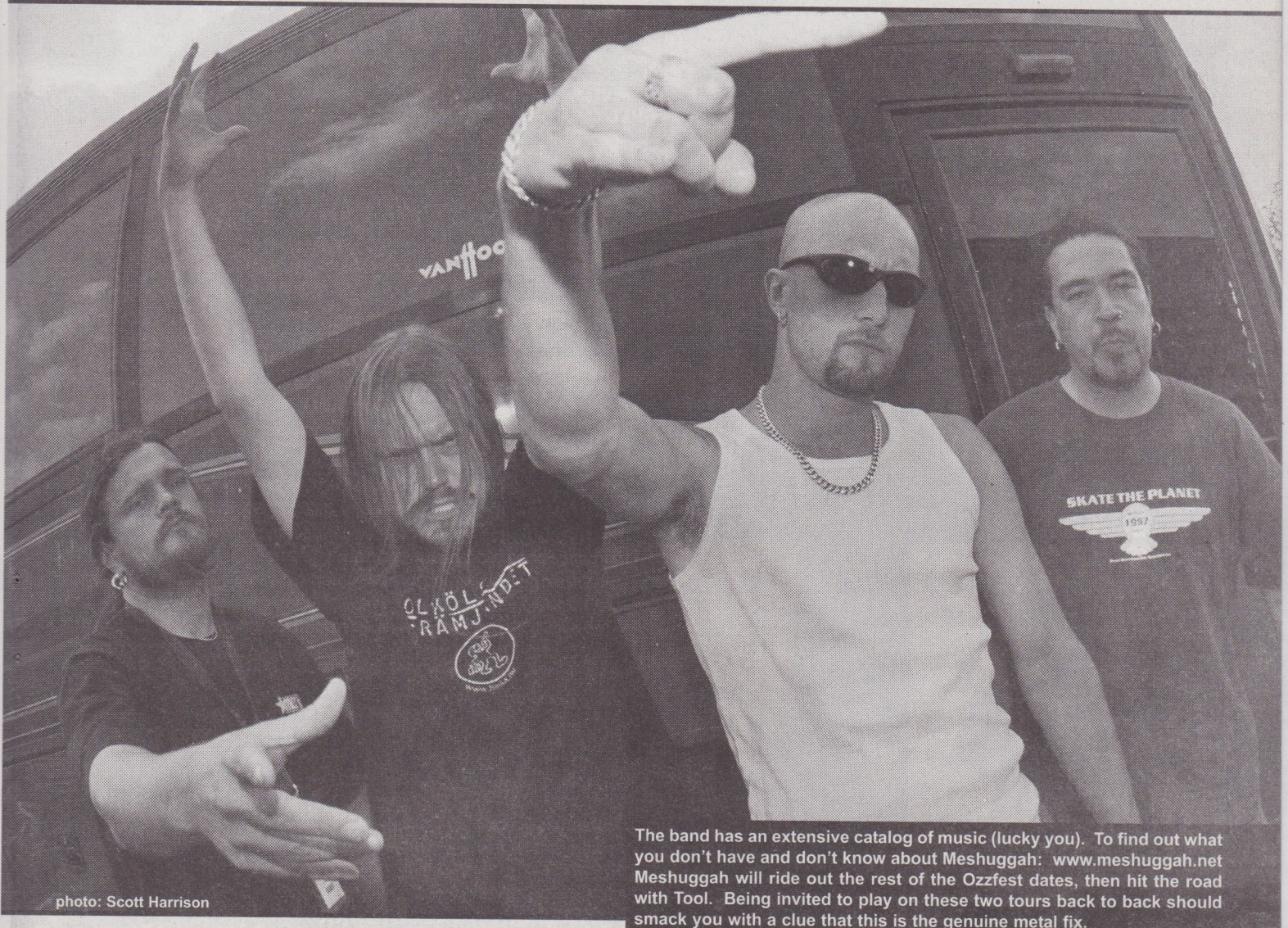

photo: Scott Harrison

The band has an extensive catalog of music (lucky you). To find out what you don't have and don't know about Meshuggah: www.meshuggah.net Meshuggah will ride out the rest of the Ozzfest dates, then hit the road with Tool. Being invited to play on these two tours back to back should smack you with a clue that this is the genuine metal fix.

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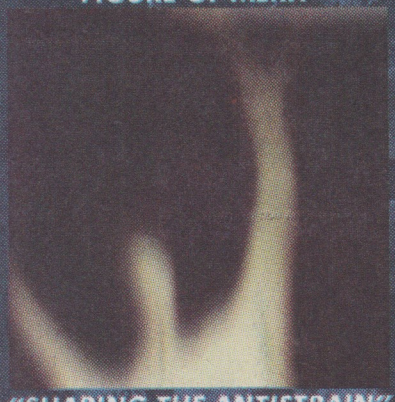


"SHAPING THE ANTISTRAIN"

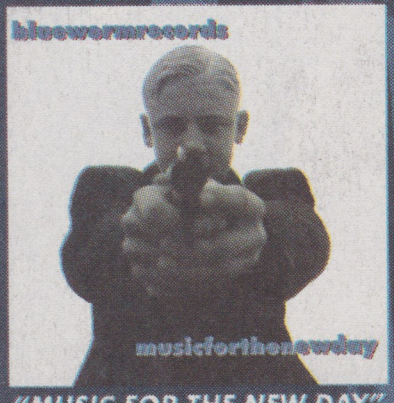
REDOVERLUNAR

"THEO'S REVENGE"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

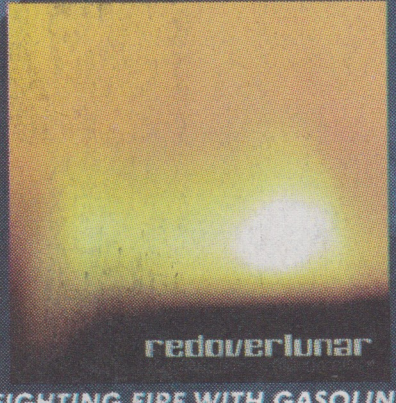
"MUSIC FOR THE NEW DAY II"

VARIOUS ARTISTS



"MUSIC FOR THE NEW DAY"

REDOVERLUNAR



"FIGHTING FIRE WITH GASOLINE"

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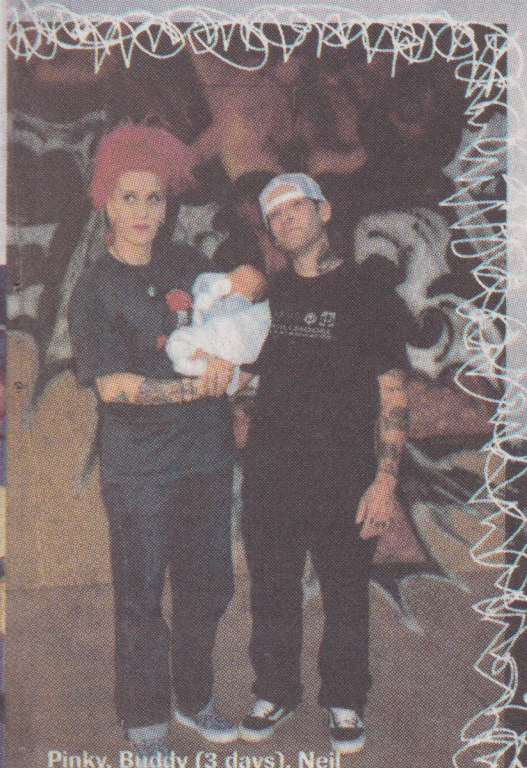
Birth of a Child, Birth of a Company

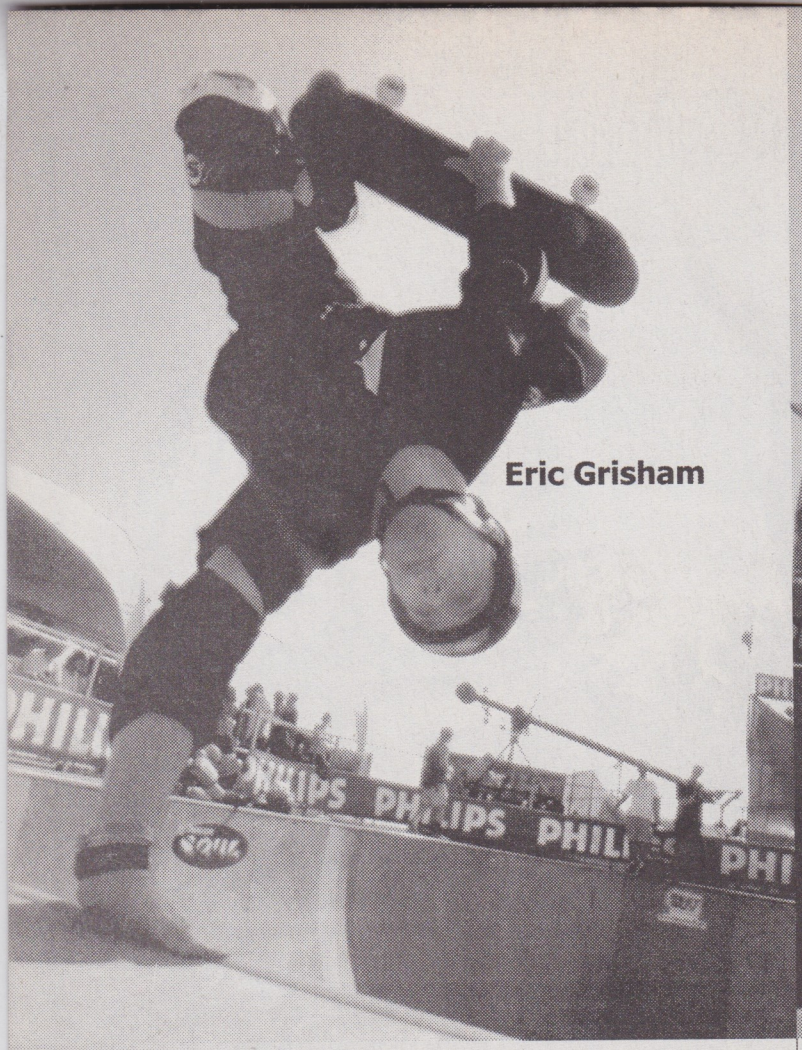
words and photos by m.young

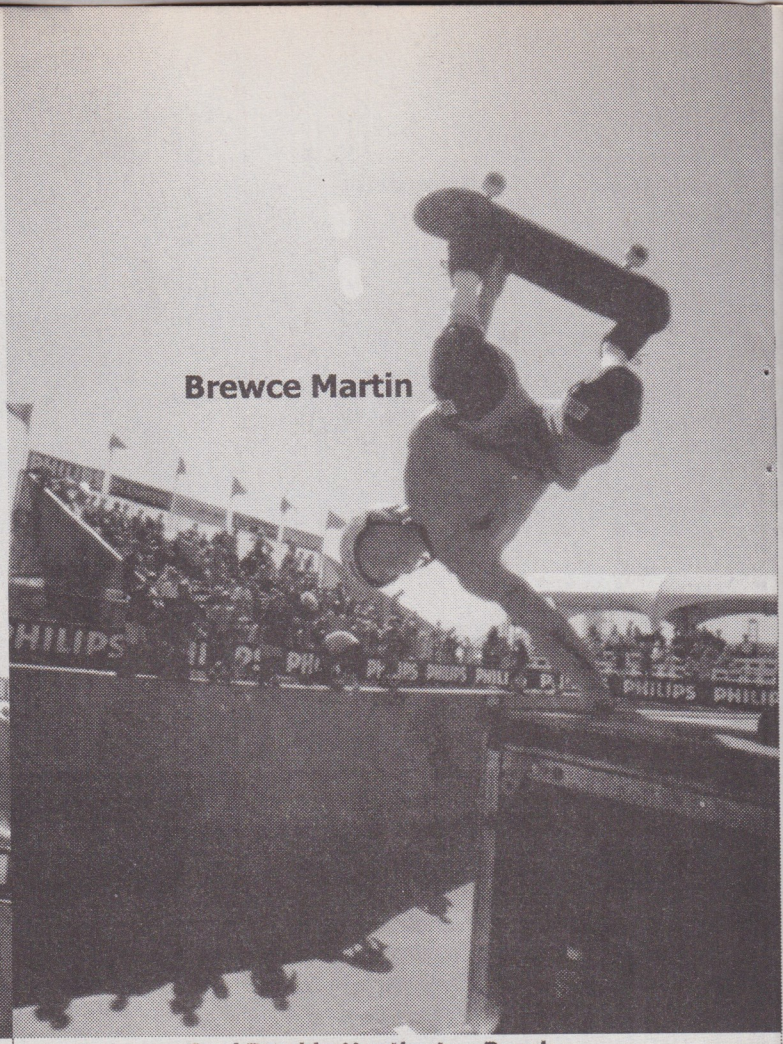
Accomplished professional skateboarder Neil Heddings (Vans, Independent Truck Co, Pig Wheels, CleanBox Entertainment, Miller Brewing Co...) is the proud father of his new company Rollmodel Skateboards and his newborn son Buddy Jameson Heddings. Buddy was born 6lbs, 13ozs at 1:05am on August 28th, 2002. Congratulations Heddings family!

Rollmodel is celebrating new beginnings with **SLAM HESSIAN**, a snake-session contest at the renowned Pink Motel in Los Angeles on October 12th, 2002. The contest starts at around 1pm and goes all day with a $2,000 purse for the first place winner. All voting will be done by the skaters and there will be refreshments and live musical entertainment for everyone.

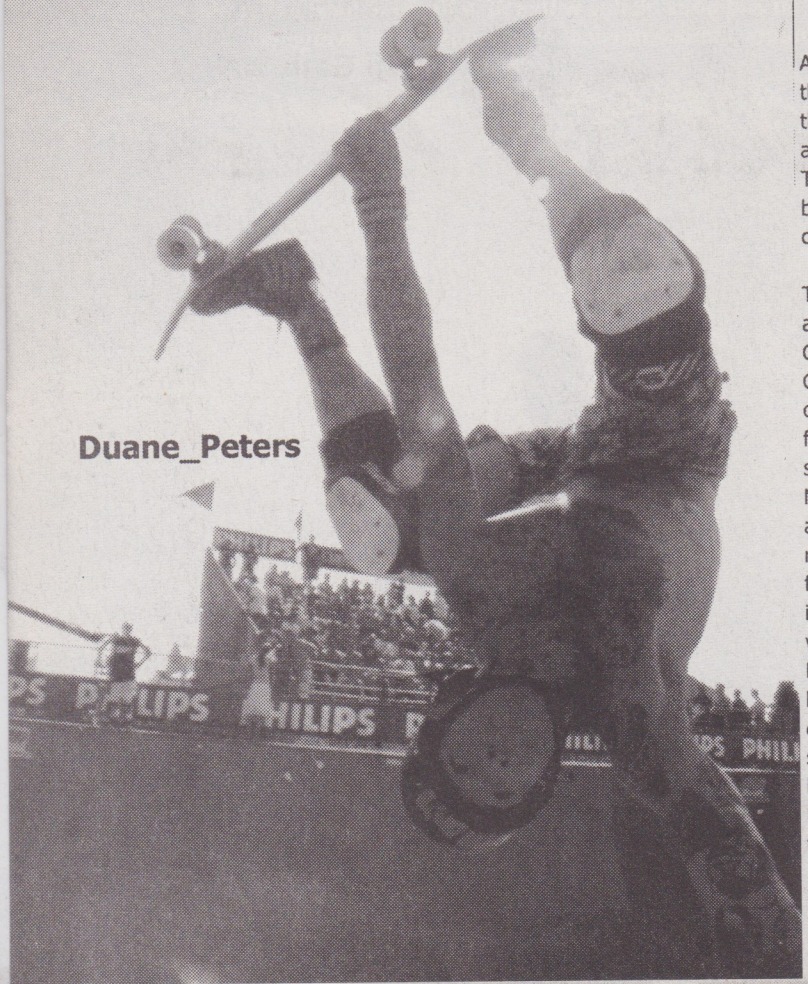


Pinky, Buddy (3 days), Neil





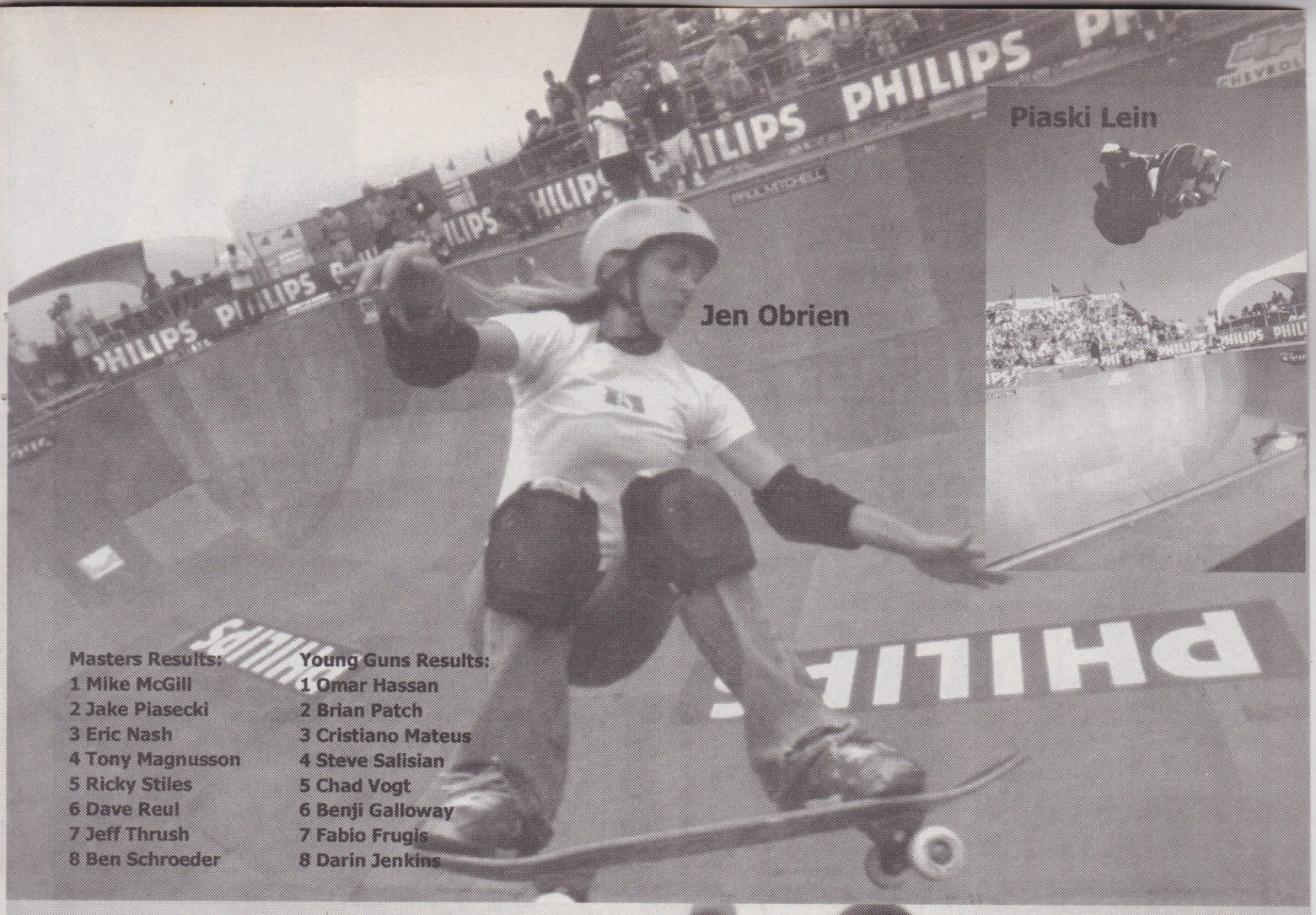
Soul Bowl in Huntington Beach



At the same time as the Gravity Games were going on in Cleveland OH., thousands upon thousands were treated to some old school skate action on the sands in HB. Yes folks, it didn't matter that Tony Hawk wasn't in attendance or that the skateboarding monkey didn't make an appearance. The attendee's were not your average hardcore skateboarders, they were beach goers. It's a much different type of contest that results with these circumstances. One that is enjoyable and frustrating at the same time.

The skating was really going strong through the whole weekend. It's called a Masters Competition because all the skaters are over 30 years old. Grandmasters are over 35 and Young Guns are the current pros. The Young Guns field was a little slim because of the Gravity Games where the big pay outs draw the current pros. That didn't stop Omar Hassan and Brian Patch from entering and ripping hard. Jen O'brien and Carabeth Burnside were shredding the bowl and getting good girl response from the crowd. Into the Masters division I'll go next where Tony Magnusson and Mike McGill were allowed to enter the division illegally. What's up with the WCS making up the rules as they go along? The real winner of this division was Jake Piaseki followed by Eric Nash. Unfortunately McGill stole the winnings by getting 1st in a division he shouldn't have been in. Lastly the Grand Masters was filled with legendary skaters from many years past. Duane Peters, Salba, Eddie Elguerra, Brewce Martin, and Eric Grisham gave me hope for my future as I head into my 30's. These guys skated their ass's off and some of them are over 40 years old! Much Respect goes their way! Duane pulled off a last second 'hell ride' beating out the ever steady Eddie E. Other side notes of interest include the best trick contests in the bowl and on the street course. Brian Patch took the street trick money. Christiano Mateus pulled a 360 varial to grab between his legs and still lands it to grab his share of the dough.

All in all, I think the crowd got a close up view of some fine skateboarding action and a better appreciation of what the vert skaters do.

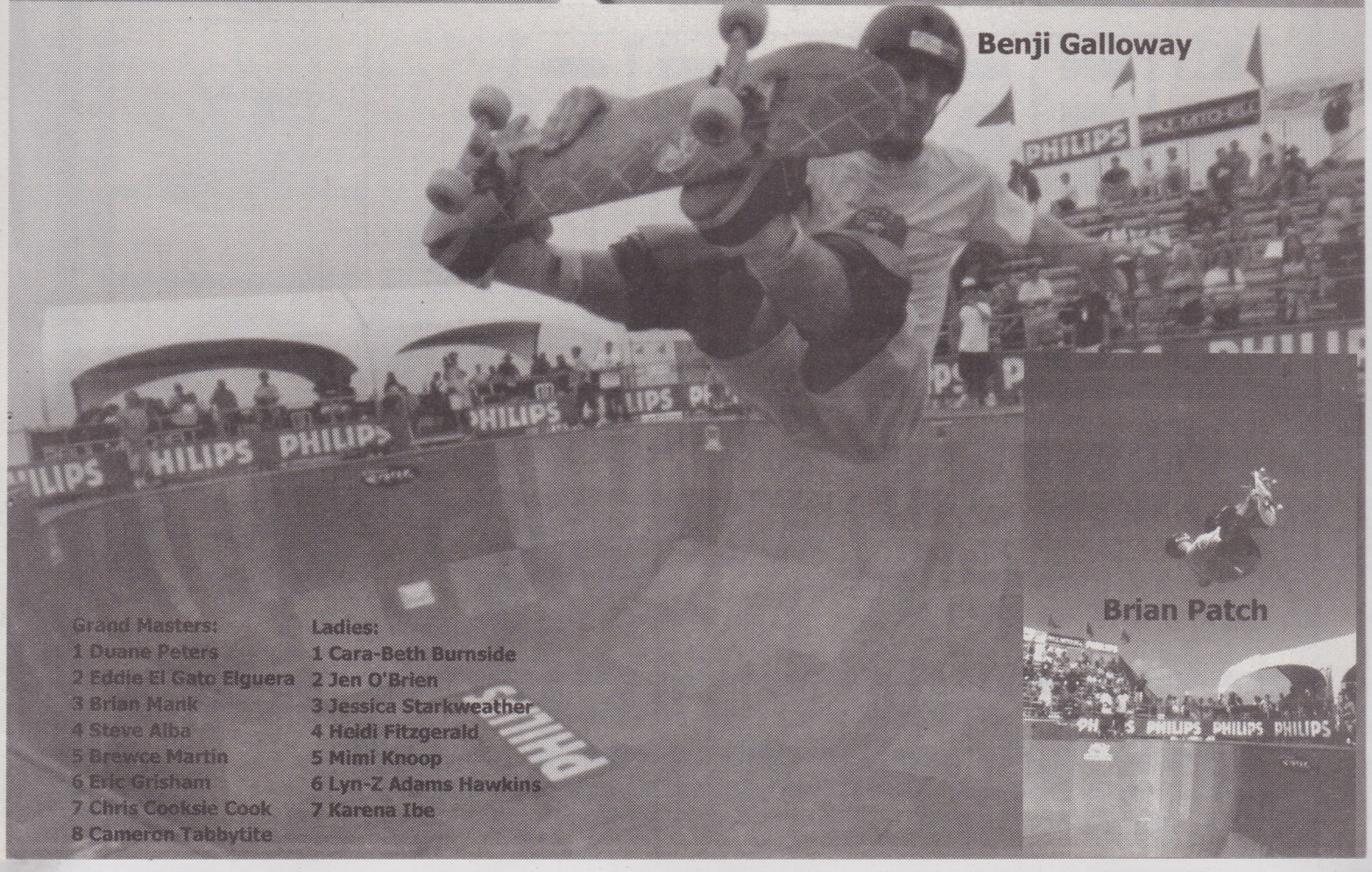


Masters Results:

1 Mike McGill
2 Jake Piasecki
3 Eric Nash
4 Tony Magnusson
5 Ricky Stiles
6 Dave Reul
7 Jeff Thrush
8 Ben Schroeder

Young Guns Results:

1 Omar Hassan
2 Brian Patch
3 Cristiano Mateus
4 Steve Salisian
5 Chad Vogt
6 Benji Galloway
7 Fabio Frugis
8 Darin Jenkins



Grand Masters:

1 Duane Peters
2 Eddie El Gato Elguera
3 Brian Mank
4 Steve Alba
5 Brewce Martin
6 Eric Grisham
7 Chris Cooksie Cook
8 Cameron Tabbytite

Ladies:

1 Cara-Beth Burnside
2 Jen O'Brien
3 Jessica Starkweather
4 Heidi Fitzgerald
5 Mimi Knoop
6 Lyn-Z Adams Hawkins
7 Karena Ibe

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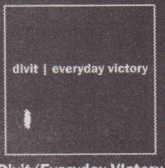

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THE VANDALS

By Kelli Skye

So it's 2002, in case you didn't realize, and we're finding ourselves in the home stretch straight into December where we'll celebrate Christmas and welcome 2003. Why not start the Christmas shopping early and check out the new Vandals album? Just a thought. Since it does come out on September 17, right after they finish up playing a huge show in the Inland Empire. Together 13 long years and it has come to this "Internet Dating Super Studs" which doesn't only offer 14 fun filled songs, but the opportunity of a lifetime – the chance to go on a hot date with one of the members of the band. Take your pick ladies, or guys if you're into that, you could be on your way to making the memory that you will talk about for years to come and be proud to tell your children.

Before all of this even takes place let's dig into the mind of Vandals bassist, Joe Escalante. After an entire day of band interviews on the radio, on the phone and in person, I spoke to Joe at around 6:00 p.m. and was still enthusiastic about the interview.

Skye: Did you have a busy day today?
Joe: Yeah it was pretty crazy. We did interviews all day. Some all together, some separate. Split us up and back together...again and again.

S: Okay Joe, let's get started. Where are you guys from and how did you get started up?
J: We're all from Orange County except for our singer; he's from Long Beach. We were just involved in the punk rock scene where everyone is just in a band and pretty soon we were all in the same band and we've played together in this line-up for about 13 years. Now we're spread out, like I live in Hollywood but our guitar player still lives in Orange County – we moved.

How do you explain your bands staying power? Some bands can't stay together 3 months, let alone 13 years.
We do what we want to do. Too much punk rock is not life or death career so we'd been doing other things to pay the bills and sooner or later, it's weird because at one point this started being the biggest moneymaker for us. It was strange...it wasn't the biggest but it's been profitable even though we never intended it to be. So yeah...I don't know. And we don't have band meetings either! That's one of our rules.

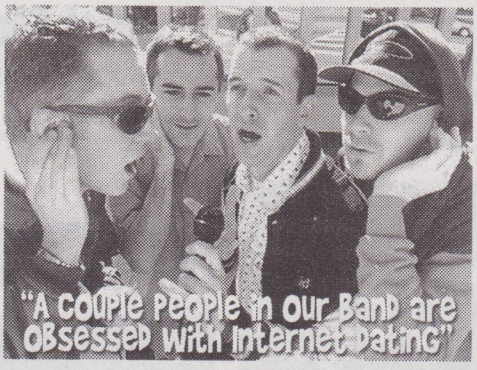
Staying out of each other's underwear?
Yeah because that's where bands break up. They break up always during their "meetings."

How would you describe your bands personality?
Not that serious, but kind of complicated.

Uh, okay can you elaborate for me?
Let's see...how are we complicated? Why? Because like we're in this punk band and we're trying to do the best we can but it's not "punk" to do that great so now it's like all of a sudden we're doing something great and the singer will say "I don't want to do that it's lame" which is good because that's what bands do when they're big...but no. Like say I don't want to sign autographs, well then you're making the kid mad, but I still don't want to. But then you're an asshole. But I really like this kid and I don't want him to worship rock stars, yeah but he already does, so what are you going to do about it?

How do you feel people respond to that whole show with it being old punk and new punk bands and the whole "death of punk" by having this one show?
Well our singer calls it 25 years of punk rock down the drain. I just call it 9-14. But, yeah what are you gonna do? People want to see these bands. The timing couldn't be more perfect, because we can plug the record. We can stand on top of the mountain and say there is a new record coming out next Tuesday! So that's a good thing for us.

How was it recording your new album?



We all have our own home studios so we're pretty used to working with machines and trying to get the best sounds we can out of the best technology available to us. Warren, our guitar player has been producing our albums for years so everyone kind of knows what to expect and we prepare because we know exactly what's going to happen so it's pretty comfortable.

Home studios? Do you guys ever talk?
Yeah we record a lot of stuff separately but then we get together in teams and work on some songs.

What does the title of your album stand for?
A coupie people in our band are obsessed with Internet dating and so it's pretty realistic and out of this contest thing, we made a way to get the kids involved in hyping our record. Half the battle is getting people informed, letting them know we have a new record because we don't have commercials on MTV or radio airplay. So this is a great way to let people know. It kinds means everyone on the Internet is a super stud.

How does the song writing process work in your band... does everyone stay involved?
I forgot to tell you one other thing. My parents met on the Internet.

(pause) huh? There wasn't an Internet when your parents got together.
Ha! Whatever it was 10 years ago. Okay, so song writing process... Well, everyone works differently. Someone might come in with a title and we could have a song that's just funny and we might have a song floating around waiting for words. Sometimes Josh and Warren will give me a CD with music on it and I'll try to think of lyrics. That sorta thing. Sometimes I bring things to Warren and then he'll completely change it around...and it will be (dramatic pause) ...better.

How would you describe your live shows?
Um...I...let's see. Our show...well the best drummer you've ever seen in your life. We play some pretty decent punk rock and we have a mutant guitarist. I don't know how to explain that guy. He's half Angus Young and half Michael Flatley, the guy that does Lord of the Dance.

Nice. So how can I win a date with someone in the band?
Glad you asked! You have to post your info on internetsuperstuds.com. Then people vote to see if it should be you on the date.

What do you guys plan on doing on the date? What if it's a dude?
Well...it depends on whom we get. We can have dudes if they win. So far a dude is winning on Dave's dating thing so he has to date a dude. Dave said if the dude is hot then he'll show him the town but if he's ugly he's gonna treat him to ice cream and call it a night.

What are your thoughts on mainstream music today?
I like when they play bands like Blink 182 and when they play bands like New Found Glory. When they play that Korn crap, rock, rap with fake anger. That's fake anger in that music. I don't like it, it's just terrible.

Do you have songs that you just hate to play?
There are a lot of them I don't like to play. There's one song about this band Agent Orange and it's just so mean, I don't like to play it.

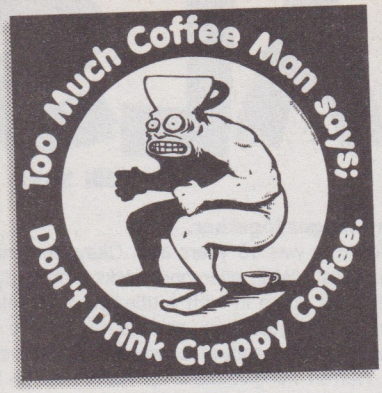
Do you like playing "My Girlfriend's Dead?"
Yeah that's fun...good times.

I have a special attachment to that song because it was played to me.
Huh? For what!

My ex played it to me to be mean. He dedicated the song to me when we broke up.
That's so terrible! That's not what that song was meant to do!

That's it, unless you feel there's something I absolutely need to add.
A few days to get the Vandals album on Sept 17.

I already have it.
Not you, the other people. They have to buy it.



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The Secession Movement

"Ak-e-'dem-ik"

(Keep Safe Records)

Crafty changes and engaging arrangements spruce up erratic and twisted pop ideals. At times, taking the less traveled path to melodic, it swerves and collides with an admirable sloppy intention. The tempos often stamp their way to attention as plucky and spastic rhythms create tension, layering it with even more chaotic structuring by applying a more manic intensity and volume. The singer has a higher dry rasp and gets more credit for his energy than ability. When he drops high voice coo's on top of his accents, it's a bad pill. There is charm within the Secession Movement as it's hard to dismiss such an ambitious approach. There are good portions of this album that are just pleasant melodic indie rock, meandering without vocals, and this is The Secession Movement at it's best. Capturing it's intent with music, as the level of creativity going into that aspect seems to far outweigh the vocal capabilities of David Downham, despite their 'grow on ya' qualities. But there are moments here, many many moments that the band captures something very artistic and pleasantly complex. Sometimes almost rocking in a tragically dramatic way, too smart for it's own good. It's a different flavor, blended distinctly for a palette open to a more experimental flare in their indie rock. It took a few listens to peal back the layers, but in the end, this is keeper for its engaging flare for the unexpected and mood capturing passages of intricate composure.

Bushman

Guttermouth

"Gusto"

(Epitaph Records)

'Do you ever find yourself striving for perfection with a virtually worthless attempt at it?' Goofy punks Guttermouth return with yet another disk full of shit eatin' grins, inside jokes and punk rock nuggets that take themselves about as seriously as a fart in an elevator. But the band has been around forever with 6 albums (this is their second on Epitaph, look to Nitro for the early years) the craftsmanship has grown to be as clever as the lyrics. So it hooks and baits accordingly along the lines of easy to pop onto clean punk rocks that occasionally stumble along a diversion of countrified and folk-song-like paths. But more as a goof than any stylistic homage's being paid. Witness the title track 'Gusto'. It has that oompa bass line found in most bad country, and sounds like a bit like 'The Dave's I Know' from a the Kids In The Hall episode. But if you want a hook MTV should pay a billion dollars for, check the track 'Vacation' and the vocal catch that bands like Sum41 and Blink182 cash in on regularly. Lyrical depth: 'Just because I live like an animal - Room smells like a petting zoo - Sometimes I go pee in the shower - does not mean I don't love you.' Or 'I want to give you all of my foot long - and grab my hotdog and place it in your bun' (from the dismissible 'Foot-long' that has a modern country beat mixed with some backing do-waaaa vocals. The bizarre, yet strangely enjoyable surprise of this disk is 'My Town'. It's as if Guttermouth snuck into a B-52's session and swiped one of their songs. Casio driven and Fred Schneider inspired vocals. Why? Dunno, but glad they allowed this on the disk. 'Contribution' has an unapologetic and driven feel. Standout track. 'Looking out for #1' is the band doing it's best Dropkick Murphy's/Flogging Molly imitation (but sounding more like pirates than Irish). Overall it's when the band actually kicks out a straight up jam, that's when they shine. The undeniably catchy whine and generally uptempo'd nuggets of stupid fun keep this enjoyable all the way through. Even though it often has about as much substance as gas station nacho cheese, and will go through you about as fast, but generally makes a tasty treat anytime I indulge. Small portions though, unless you want some quality toilet time.

Bushman

mewithoutYou

"[A—>B] LIFE"

(Tooth And Nail)

For a Freshman effort, mewithoutYou receives and A. They mix violent screaming hardcore with crunching guitars and the spoken word with beautiful melodies. It is very hard to decipher one's self from other bands in this type of music right now, but I hear touches of innovation and unique style from mewithoutYou. Guitars are used as crazy sounding background noise on a number of tracks like "We Know Who Our Enemies Are" and "I Never Said I Was Brave." My favorite song would have to be "Gentlemen," which it sounds like should be played with "(A)." Singer Aaron Weiss often sounds much like a cross between Henry Rollins and Ian MacKaye (of Fugazi), which creates an interesting blend. I think this record was definitely improved by producer J. Robbins who has produced such greats as Dismemberment Plan and The Promise Ring (and has played in Jawbox and Burning Airlines). mewithoutYou has a great label in Tooth And Nail and is a very young band that will probably mature with time. Look for these guys to take the scene by storm in the coming years.

Tom

The Miracle Of 86

"Kevin Kolankowski"

(Immigrant Sun Records)

Where the hell did these guys come from? It just proves there is so much good music out there and it is hard to get a chance to listen to it all. The Miracle Of 86 is calm, collected, lyrically challenging musical bliss. All of the songs have phenomenal acoustic guitar parts supported by live sounding drums, bass, and very casual lead guitar. The closest genre is maybe emo or folk style indie rock with some groove. I hate trying to characterize good bands that really have a sound their own, but what the fuck. Kevin Devine has an enchanting voice and his lyrics are definitely inspiring. It seems though that this whole album is named after and dedicated to Kevin Kolankowski. In a special thank you to Kolankowski The Miracle Of 86 says he "...has captured our flag and still continues to pirouette gracelessly through the night sky like a wounded dove." Yeah, what ever floats your boat I guess. The bio said The Miracle Of 86 was playing with The Promise Ring in NYC and I ! thought, that's bold, The Promise Ring is huge, but now I understand why. These guys are the perfect opening act for The Promise Ring. There is also a great version of Bob Dylan's "One Too Many Mornings" and Pavement's "Range Life" which are both classics. I don't think this album will come out of my CD player for at least a few weeks.

Tom

Hanover Saints

"Truth Rings Out"

(Facedown Records)

There aren't any songs about ale or pubs or anything, so I'm having a tough time calling this one gutter-punk. I guess Hanover Saints have got a bit of the street-punk sound going with their quick tempos and fast picking a la FYP or Cockney Rejects but their lyrical content is a little too highbrow to get lumped in with those other acts. In "You're Not Alone" lead singer Brian Faucett wails, "Stark raving mad with angry faces / Hangin' out at all the usual places...Reciting the best written rhetoric / Alleyway boys and rival crews / Used to be friends and not ashamed of you". The majority of the tracks focus on the excess of violence in today's world and the myriad of ways there are to combat the problem. While I can't say that all thirteen tracks held my attention, I can say that there's enough here to satisfy fans of the Bouncing Souls until their next record comes out. Hanover Saints formed after the demise of Faucett's previous outfit, Anguish Unsaid, and judging by the material on this initial offering are sure to be around for a while to come.

Brian Greenaway

Nicotine

"Samurai Shot"

(Asian Man Records)

If NOFX were from Kyoto, they'd be Nicotine. Or, I guess, if Nicotine were from California, they'd be NOFX. "Samurai Shot" contains a whopping twenty-five tracks of SoCal sounding punk rock by way of the Pacific Rim. While far from possessing Fat Mike's sensibilities as a singer, Nicotine's lead vocalist Howie does a more than adequate job on the mic. Occasionally his Cat in the Hat rhyme scheme gets a bit old, but a decent effort nonetheless. The true genius at work here is Yasu, Shogun of the six-string ax. Yasu's quick picking and effortless tempo changes are the real reason "Samurai Shot" is worth a listen. Sure, some subtleties of the English language are sacrificed here and there. Sure, some of the tracks sound like they were recorded inside a can of Hormel chili. Sure, "Aquarious" [sic], "My Mom", and "Motel Hell" are a few of the dumbest songs ever recorded. There are enough hidden gems here to make this one worth checking out. Just don't pay too many Yen for it.

Brian Greenaway

Future Shock

"The Art of Xenos"

(Syntax Records)

Future Shock entertains us aliens with syntactically correct hip-hop. Positive in all they preach, this crew will prod your little mind with the ultimate question then slap with the ultimate answer. Guest appearances by the SolSeekers, Sup The Chemists and DeepSpace5 mutate with the hard-hitting flows of Ajax, Soldier and Ahred to spawn a consistent album from the first to the last track. From lyrical content to beats this is one of the best SD hip-hop albums to drop in the past couple of months.

Kevin Farr

InTheVisualz

"Menatal Criminals Ep"

(InTheVisualz Records)

INTHEVISUALZ manifested from the minds of individuals wishing to deliver the gift of gab to a world still wiping the sleep from their eyes. INTHEVISUALZ sound will reverberate in your cranium for days as you fumble over the words to describe the sound you've heard. They'll wreck your psyche up as they spit eloquent lines over Z.G.S. beats. With political positions and social constrictions these Cali heads choose to marinate in the underground, utilizing it as an outlet for positive change and expression. INTHEVISUALZ delivers in an array of homegrown smoked out, brain stimulating style lyrics and beats. Also expect an LP to drop on Halloween dubbed "Smoke Signals". And to further your underground education you can get Azmah and Switch Griffens debut release "The Drifters" expected to drop on the day of the dead as well.

Kevin Farr

Mudhoney

"Since We've Become Translucent"

(Sub Pop)

I think Mudhoney finds their music to be underappreciated and ignored. Just look at the title "Since We've Become Translucent." Not a very good disposition on life is it. However, this band has been around since the 80's and during their illustrious history they helped define that fuzzy rock n roll called grunge. I bought one of their albums back in about '94, listened to it half a dozen times, and gave it to my friend as a birthday present. I guess grunge was never something I wore on my chest. Mudhoney have become like Kirk Gibson when he played for the Dodgers in the '88 World Series and hit the winning home run in one of the games. This band sounds like they are trying to expand their horizons and try something new and it sounds really good. I love the use of horns on a few of their tracks. Mudhoney, old grunge rockers, nearly retired, but still proving they kick ass.

Tom

Embrace Today

"F.Y.I.E"

(The Life Recording Company)

Embrace Today's message can pretty much be summed up by examining the lyrics to "Pissed Off": "The time is now to think it out / Get up and make a change / With X'd up hands...We need to start / We need a spark...Pissed off music for positive kids...Pissed off but positive". Embrace Today do their best to make up for their lack of actual musical skill with sheer amounts of volume and energy. Earth shattering vocals and a constant barrage of sonic defiance characterize each pulverizing song. Personally, I prefer a little Bad Religion sugar and cream in my punk rock, and this straight-outta-the-jungles-of-Guatamala-no-filter-necessary-kick-you-in-the-groin-java is just a little too strong for me. All eight tracks sound like a prolonged car accident in that they grab your attention right away and you might even turn your head to quickly observe the destruction before driving by the wreck as quickly as possible on your way to the grocery store for toilet paper. The final track of "F.Y.I.E" is "Cold Day in July" which, unless I'm mistaken, is also the name of a Dixie Chicks tune. It's my ex-girlfriends fault that I know that, but truth be told, I think I prefer the Chicks to Embrace Today.

Brian Greenaway

Agoraphobic Nosebleed

"Frozen Corpse Stuffed With Dope"

(Relapse)

Fuck me if I have any fucking clue what the fuck this fucking shit is supposed to fucking goddamn be or be doing, but I fucking dig it like a fucking grave, baby. Agoraphobic Nosebleed is a whirling dervish of sound, slamming against the silence and silencing the mundane. They take 1/8th Godflesh (make that 1/16th Godflesh and 1/16th Skinny Puppy), 1/8th surrealism, 1/8th Naked City, and, okay how much is that now? Three-eighths? Okay, and they cover Nuclear Assault's old tune, "Hang the Pope," so let's say they have another 1/8th that's metal and maybe another 1/8th that consists of all sorts of fucked up sampling and another 1/8th of drug crazed experimentation and an 1/8th of dope and an 1/8th of Afghani anthrax infected heroin and the last 1/8th would be distilled 100% pure angry hardcore vibes with a scary intellectual underpinning you aren't likely to find anywhere else. Take all these various parts and shake well on one of those paint mixing machines they have in the hardware and tools section at Sears, you know, like what Bart used to shake up Homer's can of beer for a April Fool's gag on "The Simpsons," and spread it over 38 slices of moldy Wonder bread (one slice per song on the disc) and, then and only then do you have the faintest glimmer of an incanabulaic thought as to what this fucking shit is the fuck about.

DICK

Audiovent

"Dirty Sexy Knights In Paris"

(Atlantic)

Question, if my aunt's, coworker's, daughter's, mailman's boyfriend lived three blocks from Kurt Cobain does that mean I deserve a big record deal and radio attention if I fart into a microphone for five minutes. Audiovent is another who's who's cousin, brother, or son in rock n roll. Three members of this band are at least vaguely related to members of Incubus. The difference is that Audiovent is strikingly better than the other all in the family bullshit hitting the streets today. They even had an independent record before this one. The lyrics are candid and true especially on "The Energy" and "When The Rain." Jason Boyd's voice sounds an awful lot like his brother's, but not too much. I like Jason's delivery much better though. The guitars are perfectly distorted for Jason's voice and the riffs are great. These guys listen to a lot of classic rock and it is definitely reflected in their music. Get ready to be thoroughly annoyed though because the radio will surely play these guys out.

Tom

Drunk Injuns

"From Where the Sun Now Stands I Will Fight No More Forever"

(Alternative Tentacles)

Drunk Injuns are skate punk band from the early 1980's and the songs on this CD were recorded in that period. What that means for all y'all is that this is probably the most accessible these songs have ever been on compact disc. Skate punk is a genre I don't fully understand. I say that because the Drunk Injuns do not sound like what I'd expect skate punk to sound like. What did I expect skate punk to sound like? Well, fast paced, somewhat surf-oriented with stupid lyrics about shredding, grinding and gleaming the cube with bratty sounding vocals. But this is not at all the sound of the Drunk Injuns, which is slow paced, thoughtful and rather dark in tone. The album does sound like it was recorded in a warehouse with more room tone filling the mix than you'd find in all of Black Sabbath's albums combined. Basically, don't let the label of skate punk make you afeared of giving this album a listen and since it's released on "Alternative Tentacles" that means you can direct your internet browser over to their website that's conveniently located at www.alternativetentacles.com and download a sample song or two to see what you think.

DICK

Dumpster Junkies

"Psychopathic Thoughts"

(Rodent Popsicle Records)

Nothing like a terminal case of 'only-itis' to bring down an otherwise good, full-blown, fast, screaming from the drainage ditch hardcore band. Whenever somebody says anything like "No one knows the pain inside," I have to shake my head and smirk. Yeah, you're the number one fucking unique human being out of the seven billion plus on the planet that has completely unique feelings. None of the other seven billion humans on the planet has ever hurt inside like you. Give me a goddamn freakin' break. The rest of the lyrics on the album deal with getting even, making claims that others do not know who they are fucking with when they fuck with the singer of the Dumpster Junkies and so forth, you know, fight, fight, fight, etc... If this sounds like something that'd appeal to you then I highly recommend you pick this album up since it's better than most of its ilk.

DICK

fonzie

"built to rock"

(Jump Start)

This band has a great sound. fonzie is another of the infamous Sweetish pop-punk bands invading the US. From what I know this movement is due, in part, to Millencolin a wonderful outfit. The vocals in fonzie are harmonized beautifully which is an essential for this genre. The vocals are supported by synchronized fast beat drums and guitars riddled with power chords and harmonies. I could see fonzie being featured in skate and snow videos. When I hear fonzie I get a whole bunch of energy and want to go waste it with recreational activities (of any kind). At times, I could swear I've heard this band before, but I think they are just hopelessly unoriginal. The formula is saturated, but it still tastes good with fonzie's recipe.

Tom

Mung

"Off the Mark (a seven year boil)"

(Rodent Popsicle)

This CD ties together various tracks from 1991-1998, the years that Mung was playing together as a band. Mung plays insouciant peanut butter and grape jelly on wonder bread punk rock that ought to appeal equally to fans of poppier Green Day/NOFX +++type bands and some of the more underground sounding bands of Mung's ilk. There are many reference points from which I could string up Mung's sound but what's the point? If you like good pop-oriented punk with slightly strained melodic vocals and harmonized choruses, then there's no one reason I can think of that you wouldn't want to try giving this a listen. The band sounds like they had genuine fun with these songs and that feeling translates over to the dutiful listener. In other words, the good-nature and seemingly right-mindedness of these songs is difficult not to enjoy and you have the luxury of digesting a band's entire seven year existence in one thick compact slab of twenty-five songs.

DICK

Freedom Call

"Eternity"

(SPV GmbH)

With their third album, "Eternity," German melodic metal band Freedom Call has gained several new fans in my neck of the woods - like everybody that's heard the album! It was immediately obvious it originated in Germany by how it sounds. The anthemic feel of the vocal backed by major speed metal instrumentals is very different than what I'm used to. The first song, "Metal Invasion," starts off with a Gregorian choir backed by an organ, which kind of threw me at first, but when this song takes off, wow! Tremendous melodies and harmonies from the choir delivered in clipped, anthem fashion are followed by an amazing keyboard instrumental backed with a drum in like 16/16 time then joined by the clear, strong vocal of Chris Bay singing the main melody - and that's just in the first 40 seconds! The sentiment expressed in this song sure matches my own, ". . . All hail to the Gods of creation/ All hail to the king of the world/ All hail to the metal invasion/ A heavenly kingdom on earth . . ." There are 8 more songs that are similar in pacing, instrumentals and vocals to the first one, but they are NOT like hearing the same song over and over. However, the other 2 songs are power ballads and different than anything the band has done previously. It's also the first time the band has used acoustic guitars. Everything about these track is just awesome. First is "Bleeding Heart," which opens with Hammond organ and then a quiet piano backing a beautiful vocal that expands to include the whole band. "Turn Back Time," the final track, almost sounds like an ancient folk song in places, while the chorus tugs at the heartstrings both melodically and lyrically, ". . . If I could turn back time/ Ease my desire/ I'll always remember the sadness I've seen in your eyes . . ." I could go on and on about this album, but my space is limited. If you're a hard rock or metal fan, this album is like a dream come true.

Mary Ellen

LA Guns

"Waking The Dead"

(Spitfire Records)

I could make this really simple for ya. Did you at any time say you liked LA Guns? Yea?, cool, buy this and you'll be impressed. If you never liked this band, this album won't do a thing for you. The rest of this review is meaningless for you. Never heard of LA Guns, aw fuck. Now I gotta school you in timeframe of the early-mid 80's, sunset strip, an explosion of guitar and drug fueled glam rock scene from which this band spawned from, made their mark, singer left, 15 years between then and now, a bunch of albums, singer came back... see, it's gets too involved for a CD review. The overall sound does smack of the 80's, but with Tracii Guns whipping down big-ol ego commanding guitars. Lots of lead work of course. Lyrics are still awash with mediocre poetry of coming down to the 'Hellraisers Ball' and not being lost in the 'City of Angles'. Insert guitar solo here. But I do approve of this. It might be because I was one of those kids stapling glossy pages from Hit Parader, Circus and of course Metal Edge all over my bedroom. And my walls held their share of LA Guns shots, showing their most a-rockin' poses. So the personal bias cannot be ignored. A couple of track skippers that are just reworked ideas that were old a decade ago. 'Don't You Cry' should have been left off, but they apparently needed 10 tracks so they wrapped up the disk with what sounds like a throwaway from an earlier album. I am the only one who likes this in the Modern Fix office. I am old.

Bushman

Lillian Axe

"Live 2002"

(Red and Gold Int.)

After a nearly 7 yr. hiatus, Lillian Axe has released "Live 2002," celebrating both the band coming together once again and the 20th anniversary of the New Orleans hard rock heroes. This 2 CD set was recorded at Houston's "19th Hole" in May of this year. Founding members Steve Blaze (guitar) and Ron Taylor (vocals) are joined by Darrin DeLatte (bass) Sam Poitevent (guitar) and Ken Koudelka (drums), who also produced the album, have managed to put together a terrific live album that goes on the short list. You know, the short list of live albums that have quality sound, no harangues for the crowd to join in (Ozzy, pay attention to this!) and a minimum of crowd noise other than the chant "Lillian Axe!" before the first song and at the end of the set. Although the 21 songs presented on the set have all been released on the band's previous albums ("Lillian Axe," "Love + War," "Poetic Justice," "Psychoschizophrenia" and "Fields Of Yesterday), they manage to sound fresh and interesting. Taylor's voice is far from sounding like he's been doing this for over 20 yrs. and there are some really great harmonies. The instrumentals are impeccable and the dual guitars make some amazing music. The bass and percussion lines are just as impressive. The first disc consists of songs from all 4 albums, but the radio and MTV hit songs are mostly on disc two. Some of the more recognizable tracks include "Misery Loves Company," "Pullin' The Rats Out," "Dream Of A Lifetime," "True Believer," "No Matter What" and "Sign Of The Times." This is one "live" album I definitely recommend for lovers of all things rock, hard rock and metal.

Mary Ellen

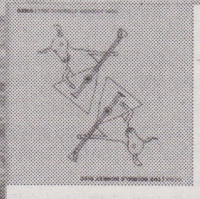
Bryan Ferry

"Frantic"

(Virgin Records)

Bryan Ferry is such a great singer/songwriter. The album "Frantic" has grown on me quicker than I could finish it. It is soooo godamn good it makes me want to buy all of his past stuff. The song "Don't think twice", is amazing. It is a piano driven bucket of tears that only Bryan could deliver. For all you Radiohead fans there is some goodness for you too, Jonny Greenwood and Dave Stewart co-wrote several tracks on "Frantic". Every song on this CD is brilliant and more passionate than an Emo kid in a coffee shop writing his book entitled "A Loveless Kiss". Anyways, if you too are writing a book or consider yourself a fan of good music then pick up "Frantic" as well. Look forward to the arrival of Bryan Ferry's latest album to your collection.

Lucas



OZMA

"Doubble Donkey Disc"

(Kung Fu Records)

(and the title is not a typo, not here anyway). I still remember the first time I heard this fine five piece make their beautiful music. I was digging through one of Grampy's old trunks in the attic, trying to find that one maroon v-neck sweater he used to wear before he died. It was gonna a look oh so cool with my new wire rimmed spectacles, I thought. Then my best and only friend Robbie called and asked if I wanted to go down to Strummies and see this band, Ozma. Of course, dude I replied and thus it began. My lifelong obsession with all things Ozma, that is. This new disc pairs two of their old platters-the Russian Coldfusion EP, and the Bootytraps EP, to serve up more than 40 minutes of purely ozmagnificent tunes. Despite the fact that the word booty is used quite often in the song titles, which kind of upsets me, this CD still totally rules. "The Business of Getting Down" is classic Ozma material, with rollicking, poppy guitars and plaintive vocals driving a high octane gem, while "No One Needs to Know" is a more introspective, somber look at mating and relating. There's also a soothing flute passage courtesy of the splendid Star Wick, and even a frenetic cover of Russian classic "Korobeiniki," or the "Tetris" song to you westerners, that really gives this one a dash of geek chic. The retarded lyrics of "You Know the Story," however, are so bad (Asked her out/she gave me looks/I've only seen on evil crooks) that everyone walked out of my last Magic:The Gathering party as soon as it stared playing. But that was ok because I got to finish off all of the half-drunken glasses of Tang they left behind. I love Tang. But not nearly as much as Ozma.

Scott Burroughs

Reviews of the Best Racing Movies by PR

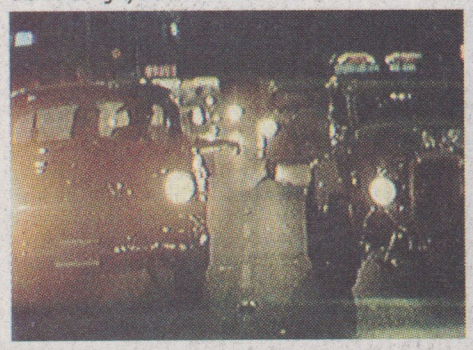
This month, we take a look at the entertainment industries take on the sport street racing and auto-based movies. Sorry, NASCAR fans, no reviews of Days of Thunder here; it sucked ass.

Writer: Gordon Chan
Director: Gordon Chan
Date: 1995
Stars: Jackie Chan
Cars: 3000GT, Skyline GTR
Fitted With: everything

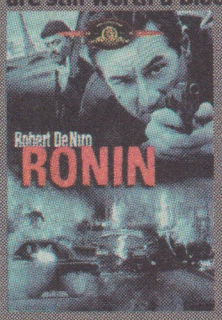
Known as "Pi li huo" in Japan, this is probably one of my favorite Jackie Chan movies, as Chan focuses less on comedic action, and more on straight fighting, racing and (gulp) some acting. As you can probably anticipated, Chan can hardly act at all, but who cares, he drives some of the best street machines in existance. The plot is pretty basic: white, insane racer guy goes to Japan to seek competition. Lots of street racing (including cops busting a boatload of racers - probably the best part of the movie, if you're a street racer), fighting, the Yakuza and a circle autocross import race make this a great movie.

Writer: George Lucas
Director: George Lucas
Date: 1973
Stars: Richard Dreyfuss
Cars: 1955 Chevy, 1932 Ford Coupe
Fitted With: 454's, aluminum heads

It's kind of an understated fact that this movie broke open more actors then any other. You've got George Lucas writing & directing, actors like Dreyfuss, Harrison Ford, Ron Howard, Wolfman Jack, Paul Le Mat and others living the 1962 era out. The plot is Lucas's most simplest ever; kids hanging out, and two drag racers looking for each other. Ford comes to town in his '55, looking for the local 'street king', Le Mat, who cruises around in a sick '32 coupe. The movie also revolves around some kids trying to get adults to buy them alcohol, picking up chicks, bad kids fucking with the police, and, eventually, some racing. A sequel was actually made in 1979 ("More American Graffiti") but bombed pretty hard. The concept was that a look into the group during Vietnam, but it was poorly thought. The only neat thing was that Ford is now a active police officer. One other note about the film; the '55 was actually leftover from the movie "Two Lane Blacktop", a movie about two guys racing across America. It's pretty decent (can be found on the Speed channel at night) and worth a look.

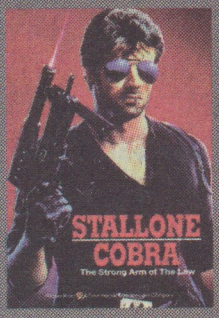


Some films that aren't racing movies, but are still worth a Blockbuster night.



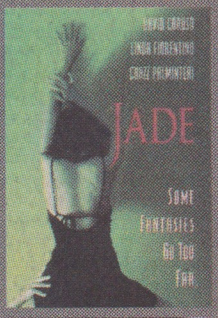
Writer: JD Zeik
Director: John Frankenheimer
Date: 1998
Stars: Robert Deniro
Cars: 1997 Audi S8
Fitted With: nitrous, bolt-on's

For the first half of the film, the vehicle is slowly built and modified, and then, finally, they take it to the streets, making for intense scenes with lots of four wheel drifting. The flick is also pretty decent.



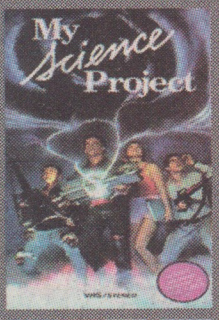
Writer: Paula Gosling
Director: George Cosmatos
Date: 1986
Stars: Sylvester Stallone
Cars: 1949 Mercury
Fitted With: nitrous

Stallone plays a cop with an attitude as he tries to catch bad guys with his '49 Mercury, which gets beat around more then his face. It's a cool movie, and has some nice cars in the background.



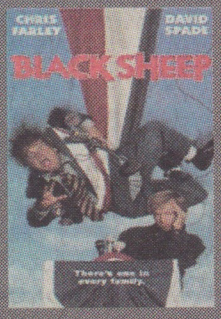
Writer: Joe Eszterhas
Director: William Friedkin
Date: 1995
Stars: David Caruso
Cars: Fords
Fitted With: nothing

This movie involves sex, murder and a long chase thru the streets of San Francisco. Although the cars aren't very exciting, both chase scenes are, making this movie pretty entertaining.



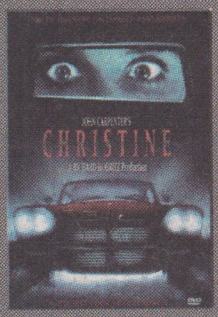
Writer: Jonathan R. Betuel
Director: Jonathan R. Betuel
Date: 1985
Stars: Dennis Hopper
Cars: 1968 GTO
Fitted With: blower

Totally cheesy '80s movie about some high school kids who take a UFO time warp device from a military compound. The faster-then-light GTO is featured, doing what it does best, towards the climax.



Writer: Fred Wolf (II)
Director: Penelope Spheeris
Date: 1996
Stars: Chris Farley, David Spade
Cars: 1992 Chevrolet II
Fitted With: blower, nitrous

If you've seen Tommy Boy, then you know what to expect. His friend, a cop, loans his car to Farley, who, later on, gets high off a leak from the tank, which unfortantly isn't likely. Cool police car tho.



Writer: Stephen King
Director: John Carpenter
Date: 1984
Stars: Keith Gordon
Cars: 1958 Plymouth Fury
Fitted With: nothing

Lightly frightening movie about a kid whose car is evil, later causing hell on his enemies and then his friends. Probably the most disturbing thing about this movie is that over two dozen Fury's died for it.

Writer: Ken Li
Director: Rob Cohen
Date: 2001
Stars: Vin Diesel
Cars: Toyota Supra, 1970 Dodge Charger
Fitted With: everything

I remember sitting in the theater, watching this screener a month before it came out, and, an hour and a half later, telling my girlfriend that this would be hell on the street racing scene. I was right! Push aside the terrible acting, the way overdone 'look' into the street racing scene, and the dozens of technical errors and oversights (you DON'T turn your Supra off right after a 100mph race), it was pretty fun and good for entertainment purposes only. With a sequal in the wings for next year, you can be sure this will be the peak of the series.

Writer: Scott Rosenberg
Director: Dominic Sena
Date: 2000
Stars: Nicolas Cage
Cars: 50
Fitted With: from stock to everything

Writer: H.B. Halicki
Director: H.B. Halicki
Date: 1974
Stars: H.B. Halicki
Cars: Plenty
Fitted With: nothing

The original "Gone in Sixty Seconds" is an entertaining, stunt filled flick, and is worth a DVD rental if you can get around the dated looks and paltry acting. H.B. Halicki, a stuntman and writer/director/star for his movie, actually died filming the final stunt for the sequal of this movie in 1983. So, what does Hollywood do to remember him? Do a remake, Hollywood style, of course! Nicolas Cage, Angelina Jolie, James Duval and a dozen other wellknowns do a fairly good job of keeping your attention, although there's a bit more attempted plot and a lot less actual action. Everytime this is on TV, I get sucked it just for a chance to check out some of the great cars featured.

Writer: Streetracing.com
Director: Streetracing.com
Date: 2002
Stars: Naughty street racers
Cars: Plenty
Fitted With: bolt on's, body kits etc

Decent hour of footage (total) of real street racing action in the San Diego and Los Angeles area. Worth a look.

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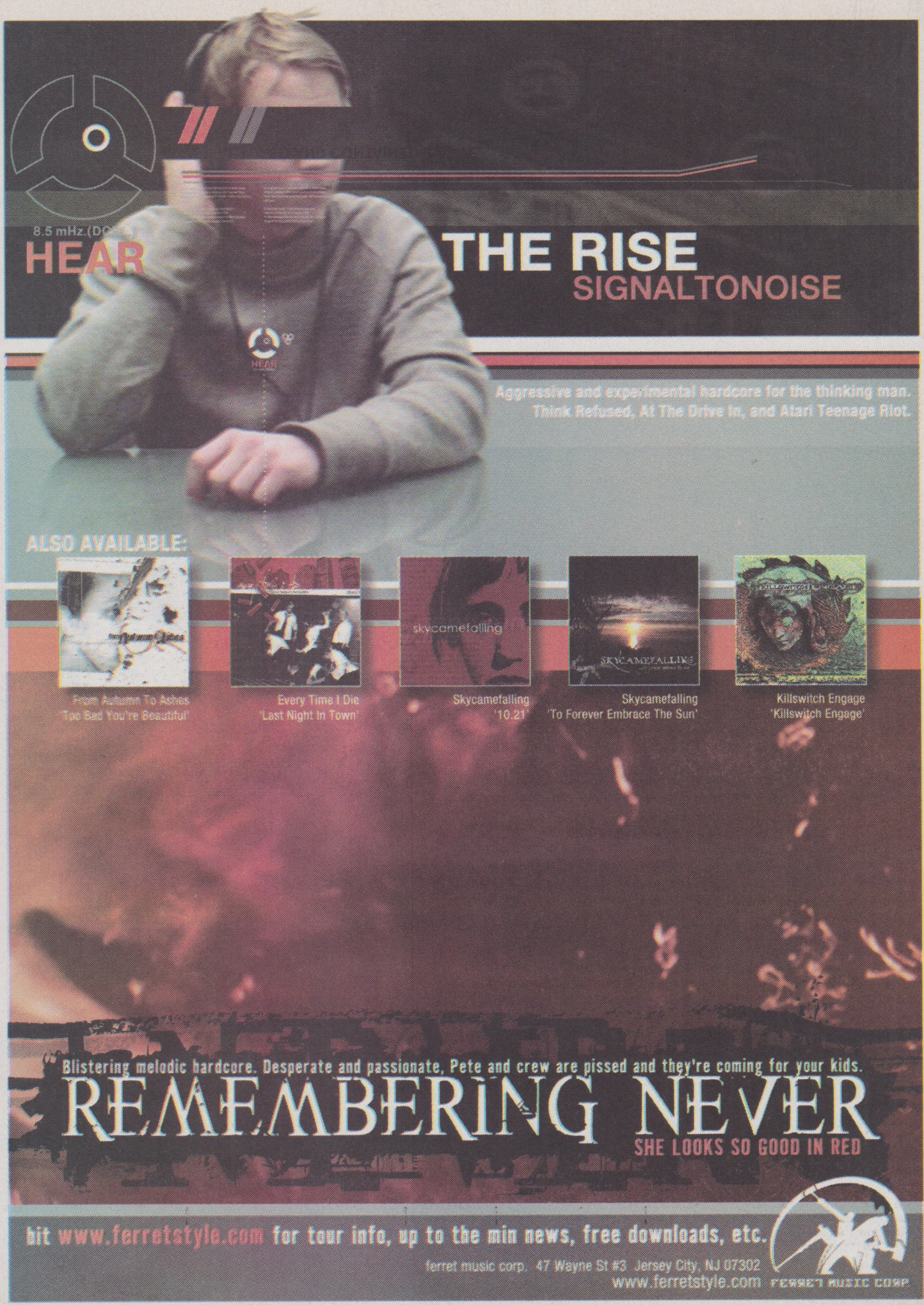
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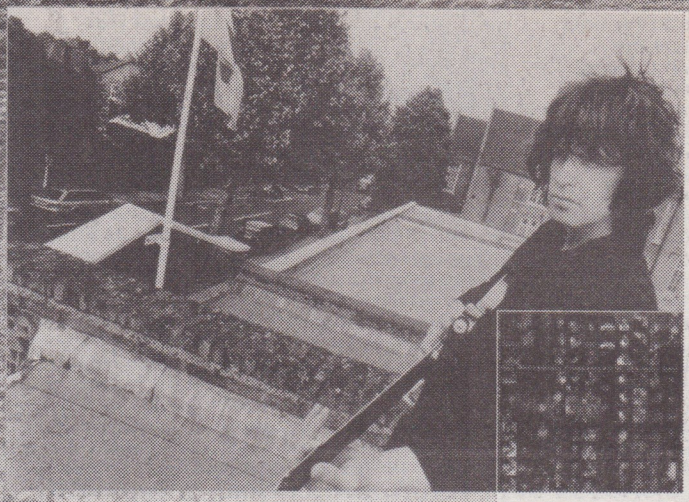


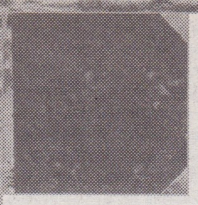
The Waterboys

"Fisherman's Blues Part Two"

(Razor and Tie)

Thankfully, this band is not a group of Bobby Boucher impersonators, gathered to sing the praises of Captain Insano and "high quality H2O." Instead, The Waterboys are an Irish band that produced two purportedly influential albums ("This Is The Sea" and "Fisherman's Blues") during the eighties. I can't speak to anything that happened in the eighties, since I was busy being in grade school, but I can say that "Fisherman's Blues Part Two," which collects songs recorded for but not included on the first "Fisherman's Blues" album, is pretty good stuff. Since The Waterboys play what's best described as folksy Irish rock (think The Saw Doctors) that incorporates influences from blues to gospel, "Fisherman's Blues Part Two" never really sounds dated, even though most of the material was recorded fifteen years ago. A few songs come off as contrived- especially "Blues For Your Baby," which seems like an excuse for a few saxophone riffs from Anthony Thistlethwaite- but for the most part, singer / guitarist and primary songwriter Mike Scott puts on a good show.

C-Train



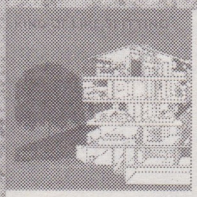
The Prom

"Under the Same Stars"

(Barsuk Records)

A Seattle based piano, bass, and drums trio is an excellent change from the standard indie rock sound that focuses on guitars. I am a huge fan of piano based music and if your not you should give it a try. The Prom gives indie icons Bright Eyes a run for their money with their somber, challenging effort "Under the Same Stars." The Prom takes a much more laid back approach than their counterparts Bright Eyes (if this is possible) who is normally a little more in your face. I love the use of strings, flute, and horn throughout the album. My favorite track would have to be "Living In The Past" which is about not being able to let go and learning how to change. Singer James Mendenhall has an absolutely amazing voice. It seems he fell in love with the piano after playing guitar for years. It sort of reminds me of Jets to Brazil singer Blake Schwarzenbach who was the guitarist for Jawbreaker before focusing on the piano in JTB. I really like the feeling I get from listening to these guys. The Prom also has a "super-fan" by the name of Chris Walla of Death Cab For Cutie. It seems Walla liked The Prom so much he produced, recorded, and played on their first Barsuk release "Saloon Song +2." Wow, support from an indie rock icon, what other convincing do you need to get this record?

Tom



Kind of Like Spitting

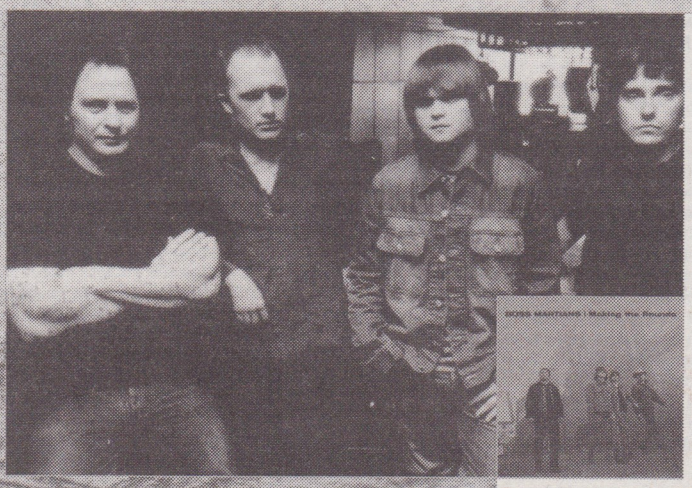
"Bridges Worth Burning"

(Barsuk Records)

The opening track 'Passionate' has a great percussive click going on with the rhythm (music geeks with recognize the drum stick snapping against the metal of the snare).

Moody and pleading. "I wanna re-live little minutes, but they just keep stacking up on themselves" just as the song gradually grows out of it's snappy beginning and blooms into bigger guitars stomps. 'Go over the top and come up from the bottom'. Sounds cool, huh? So does Kind of Like Spitting. Their music has a certain degree of intelligence that makes you feel cooler for listening to them. Singer Ben Barnett is the character of the band, delivering lyrics like they are manipulating the conversation while disguising them in little bursts of melody. The 'boom boom boom' breakout in 'We are both writers' is precious, although doesn't gel with the almost country bounce the rest of the song is wrapped in. The Weezer set of sweater rockers should find a few numbers that drive hard on those big guitar chords, making it loud, but somehow... 'mopey' at the same time. Some sleepers to wade through here along with a couple of the 'guy and his guitar' numbers, but if one is familiar with the Barsuk label, shoegazing songs that meander along, too pretty for their own good is a common flavor for their bands. But Kind of Like Spitting do craft with notable skill. Subtle influences of The Cure show in the more 'peppy' moments and maybe The Owls for the more scattered, artsy paths. 'Crossover Potential' features (very recognizably) the backing vocals of Bob Nana (of Hey Mercedes) to give another reference point for the sound you'll find here. (The best part, artistically speaking, is their CD jacket, which is stylie in itself, but between the lyrics, in the center spread, is basically a square with a little bit dropped out holding some text that reads "Holy shit I'm bleeding." For no explainable reason. ... I dig that. Slightly... over there. That's a good place for Kind of Like Spitting.

Bushman



Boss Martians

"Making The Rounds"

(Musick Recordings)

Seattle band Boss Martians have succeeded in combining their initial stylings of retro garage/surf rock with just the right touch of new wave/punk flavor and created a hard rocking, hook driven, power pop, good old fashioned rock 'n roll sound on their 4th LP, "Making The Rounds." From the opening track and title song, with its infectious beat and guitar riffs that still carry a strong underlying garage band sound, through the final track, "Every Girl In Town," that's more of a retro '60s, Brit influenced tune with lots of great instrumental bridges, this album takes you on a wild ride you don't want to get off of! "Something's There" has echoes of Humble Pie, while pop anthem "Feel It Like Everyone" reminds me of Tom Petty or Allman Bros. because of that Southern Rock beat. The Seattle sound of "She Was The One" is a major rocker and Evan Foster's vocals give it an edgy feel. With it's driving bass line provided by Steve Davis and just right percussion from Jason Reavis, my personal favorite is "Dreaming In Stereo." This song has everything going right: a bouncy beat, a tricky vocal, a great bridge featuring Nick C. on keyboards and Foster on lead guitar and an end that stops on a dime, it's a way cool tune. A few of the songs sound a bit like each other, but overall this is a fun listen that keeps you hitting the "Repeat" button. A good investment for fans of all kinds of rock 'n roll.

Mary Ellen

Ace Troubleshooter

"The Madness Of The Crowds"

(Tooth & Nail Records)

In their sophomore release, Ace Troubleshooter has come up with a decent, if formulaic, album. The opening track, "The Madness Of The Crowd," has a huge punk rock hook, full of fuzz guitar and bass and a speedy tempo, along with the required angst ridden lyrics that include, "Here I go against the grain/ It's time to yet again complain . . . Know that with each path we take/ We become the choices that we make." After hearing this song I was telling myself, "Hey, these guys are on a roll!" - until I heard the opening of song two with it's delicate acoustic and sweet vocal. That only lasts about 2 lines and then takes off with a medium paced pop/punk tune that's still pretty catchy. "Have It All" is the first emo entry, which is so-so as songs go, but does showcase the vocal ability and range of vocalist/guitarist/songwriter John Warne. Here's where the formula comes in. The next song, "Amanda," is back to speedy angst punk and so it goes for the rest of the album. This band does a great job with the punk based songs and even the pop/punk isn't bad, but they could easily lose the emo stuff. Warne has a pleasant voice and carries a tune well. The instrumentals provided by Josh Abbott (drums), Ben Dewey (bass) and Isaac Deaton (guitar, bgv's) are okay, but nothing to get overly excited about. I'd call this a good album for background music at the beach or a party, but not to get stuck in traffic with!

Mary Ellen

Terror 2000

"Faster Disaster"

(Nuclear Blast)

I assumed I'd immediately tear this stupid looking album a new asshole but I don't think I will. The album appeals to the fifteen year old little mid-eighties thrasher boy that still lurks somewhere deep inside my decaying alcohol ravaged corpse. The band's straightforward speed metal approach won't be earning them many fans, but it should be noted they seem damn good at what they do right down to an old school looseness in the drum track reminiscent of early drunk thrash like Tankard. They're speed metal sound seems to derive equal sources from both sides of the great Atlantic pond with some basic touchstones being Anacrusis, Exodus and Kreator and they most likely have their heartiest competition in contemporary bands such as The Haunted and Soilwork. It's enjoyable but you've heard it all before fifteen years ago.

DICK

The Velvet Teen

"Immorality"

(Pandacide)

This is a wonderful indie rock record from The Velvet Teen. Of all the records I've recently come into possession of this is my favorite besides Death Cab For Cutie's "Kaleidoscope." "Immorality" is characterized by sad and beautiful guitars with excellent high pitched vocals reminiscent of Thom Yorke in his most vulnerable moments. This is also a beautiful multi-colored vinyl with some great art on the record. Look for The Velvet Teen to take the underground indie rock scene by storm.

Tom

At The Gates

"Slaughter of the Soul"

(Earache)

This is that band, the band that seems to have had members move on to every other black and death metal band in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. They're that band that seems to have something like a kajillion different members that have gone on to drum, strum or produce for others all across Europe. I've heard their influence in countless other bands yet had never, until now, actually heard them. And now I see their importance to the then burgeoning death/black metal scene clearly and not only as a training ground for excellent guitarists. At The Gates stands concretely on death metal ground on this reissued early album from the group. If you already own this album you'll be sad to know it has been reissued with six bonus tracks including a Slayer cover (Captor of Sin), an unreleased track from the recording of the "Slaughter of the Soul" album (The Dying) and some demos and other covers. The band conveys melody alongside hefty guitar solos and mega-chugging riffs. If you are into the Scandinavian metal then you'd be into this, but I'm probably the last guy on the planet who has a mild affinity for the Scandinavian scene who hadn't heard these mean fuckers before this afternoon.

DICK

King Britt presents

"The Philadelphia Experiment" (remixed)

(RopeADope Records)

Disclaimer: I am in no way authorized or competent enough to offer any credible opinions on the world of DJ's, dub, jazz or any contemporary fusion of the three. That said, this is thoroughly impressive. To understand this release properly, one has to understand there is first an album called, 'The Philadelphia Experiment' that resulted from four masters of different flavors of funk (Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson (drums), Christian McBride (bass), Uri Caine (Keyboards) and Pat Martino (guitar)), without preparation, locked themselves together for three days to create the album. The band decided to allow a DJ to remix the sessions and chose King Britt (most recognizable as the Digable Planets DJ). With some guest producers lending influence on certain tracks, the album takes on many flavors, while maintaining a unifying funky/jazzy-ness playing off the more atmospheric flavorings of the keyboards. Obviously, as with most music of this nature, some tracks are repetitive and self-indulgent, taking forever to bring the listener through the journey of the song (the track 'Philadelphia Experiment (DJ Ghe Remix) blew the vibe of the disk up until that point and is the track skipper here). The draw for the novice DJ listener is that most all these song hit with a fairly upbeat and pumping tempo, but completely bypassing 'thump thump thump' of the DJ club staple. Much more jazzy and loose here. I swiped this out of the pile and claimed it for the Bushman. Not sure if there is any credibility to that, but it's the first piece of DJ culture that I've claimed for my own listening pleasure. And a pleasure to listen this most definitely is.

Bushman

Lollipop Lust Kill

"My So Called Knife"

(Artemis Records)

Marilyn Manson-ish White Zombie influenced agro-creepy metal extravaganza. Dope is another band that must be dropped for sonic comparison. Moody songs that go crawling and kicking the whole way down. Song titles are good peek into the general vibe of lyrical direction. "Black All Over", "Knee Deep in the Dead" and "Like a Disease" paint the beautiful misery that the band wallows in. "Kill my father" rings out at the end of "Father" making the dissatisfaction clear enough. "Sad Excuse for a Grip" breaks out slightly different with a quivery verse, a pounding chorus and a steady, unrelenting stomp of tempo that carries the song on it's back. The general musical approach is supposed to be metallic creepout that sludges along with special effects. 'Embrace the Demon glow'. Be evil. The world is evil. We are the sickness of the losers that waste away in this world. Heavy trip. Are you a self-loathing metallic Goth who listens to the first two bands referenced in this review? There are enough breakdowns and intros that spice up the reworked structures and override the lyrical spookhouse to make Lollipop Lust Kill worth at least a 'give it a shot' listen. Need another reason? Ok, how about a chunky metallic paintjob on Depeche Mode's "Personal Jesus" with LLK's vocalist complimenting the songs overall feel quite well. Any band who can make Depeche Mode sound cool is worth something.

Bushman

Allergic to Whores/McCarthy Commission

"Crawling for the Machine/Untitled"

(Rodent Popsicle Records)

Allergic to Whores occupies the first half of this split L.P. like an angry indiscernible mob. Their sound is dissonant, loud, clashing against itself and otherwise enjoyable with snarling wildcat vocals and chant along choruses that creep in for contrast. This is not poppy punk rock; it's abrasive, roughly and barely produced music that exists for the sake of making a noise and getting people to turn their ears over and listen for just a goddamn minute. The next half of the digital compact disc that will provide me with a lifetime of listening enjoyment if stored and treated properly is occupied by McCarthy Commission. They are also a punk rock band in the same somewhat more crusty tradition as the previous band on the split L.P. McCarthy Commission has been kind enough to print up their largely unintelligible lyrics and I see they are quite political with large jabbing thrusts of anger directed at the NRA, George W. Bush (they don't name names but it's obvious) and the Christian Coalition. I'm glad to see that some folks are still pissed off and have their eyes open enough to see how fucked the years 2000 to 2004 (if not longer) are going to make us.

DICK

Mourningside/Brando

"Split"

(Unknown)

Mourningside: Boston has an excellent underground punk/hardcore scene Iíd love to check out sometime. When you want to hear a band keeping it real with the punk roots or what I would consider true ìpunkî music, check these guys out. Brando: Pure, unbridled, aggression carried out through music. This type of hardcore reminds me of the band Mindless Self Indulgence ofÖ I would love to hear Brando live. My brian is completely fucked after this shit.

Tom

Out To Win

"Persist and Destroy"

(Triple Crown Records)

The artists formerly known as Mushmouth are back with a new name and a fresh sound to boot on this six-track EP. While Mushmouth fit into the more traditional metal scene quite nicely, OTW seem to have turned the corner into the ever-so-popular neighborhood of metalcore. The bass is a little quicker and the hooks a little more hook-y. Also the rent is a little steeper but the view is better, so you really can't complain, can you? Those out there worried that OTW may have abandoned their roots may rest easy-the same ferocity and aggression smattered throughout their earlier releases is found in bucketfuls here. There's a lot to be happy about here, unless you're one of those chronically unhappy people like OTW's lead singer Henzel. On "Trust No One" he manically screams, "You'll reap what you sew / I'll rip your heart out / Shattering all the dreams / What could have been.../ You will remember me / I'll rip your heart out". Seems like a fair statement. It would be tough to remember someone who pulled a Mortal Kombat and tore your still beating heart out of your chest, wouldn't it?

Brian Greenaway

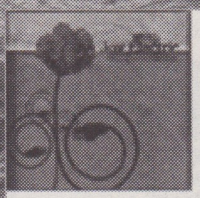
Arlo

"Stab The Unstoppable Hero"

(Sub Pop)

This one was plastered all over the Sub Pop website back in June and I thought "Stab The Unstoppable Hero," damn that's a cool album name. The title almost provoked me to buy, but then I saw the June CD list and lucky me, here I am. Arlo is another group of power poppers from LA. Of the three members of the group who write songs I can't tell which sounds the most like The Beatles. I guess "Shmedly" would take the cake with the beautiful vocal harmonies in "Stoned" and "Silkworm." (Yes, the song "Stoned" is about getting stoned.) I also feel that there should only be one writer of the songs. It seems like Arlo lacks a little focus and some tracks are definitely better than others. I love The Beatles, but with every one of their albums in my collection why do I need Arlo? The Beatles were prolific, Arlo is not, but some tracks sound so good it's hard to take out "Stab The Unstoppable Hero."

Tom



Joy Electric

"The Art And Craft Of Popular Music"

(BEC Recordings)

It's a painstaking chore to describe something you just don't care for. And so we have a two CD box set featuring 12 new songs and 3 remixes on the first disc and a19 song greatest hits collection on the second, culled from the 8-year recorded history of Christian synth-popsters, Joy Electric. This is throwback (and I mean, way back) keyboard rock, bringing to mind three words: early Depeche Mode. A few other words pop up like New Order, OMD and the Pet Shop Boys, as well as long, cumbersome and unchanging. But JE frontman Ronnie Martin seems to have been most influenced by Modesters Gahan and Gore, minus the Goth. Just squiggly, blippy sweet confection built upon innumerable layers of analog synthesizers, reminiscent of old Atari games and conversations with R2D2. The 34 songs deal with the usual love and life, and even when a broken heart is being sung about, the music is upbeat and cheerful. And, of course, there are religious undertones. Oh joy! For fans, this will most likely be the Promised Land. Anyone else will be hard-pressed to make it through the first disc. If you try, just pretend it's 1985.

smc

Six

"When The Beauty's Gone"

(1605 Worldwide Ent.)

To even attempt to grasp Six, one needs to understand the force behind this band, Lauren (who is a force, undeniable - catch it live) who was the life of another band called Drown. A phenomenal band that was the poster child for getting fucked over by the world of the major corporate labels. It's a deep story unto itself with the end result being two killer albums and an incredibly driven musician without a band. There was a band called Famous in there somewhere, which was basically some core members of Drown, but now there is Six. Which sounds like Lauren returning to his roots of stark, angry rock with a heavy twist of electronic spicing in the underlying rhythms. The opening track, 'Stranger, Killer, King' is actually an old Drown song I have on a 'Throwing Away the Demos' EP, but that earlier version had a dryer and more unbalanced mix (hey, it was a demo), so the Six version is better, hands down. The touchstone of Six is lyrics, as it's always been Lauren's strong point, painfully simplistic odes to betrayal in all forms, bitter as it's always been. I say 'simplistic' in the most complimentary of terms. Easily relatable tales of alienation and self-distancing that smacks so much more credibly than much of the nu-metal 'self-loathing is hip' anthems. Without having ANY rap feel, the lyrics do have rhyme skills and flows that would impress any MC. The drum machine sounds need to be pulled back a bit in the mix, but that might be a personal thing, as the guts of this is the rhythmic crunch of instruments digging a groove into your skin until it leaves a mark. With the exception of the more aggressive closer, 'Something's Gotta Give' (one of the stand out tracks) the feel of locked tempos that comes from playing against loops does permeate this release. Six could explode out of their mold with some more challenging directions in the structures that would speed it up, break it down... do something other than rumble along the same pace, leaving it up to Lauren to build up and tear down the intensity with his vocals. There is some dynamic with pulling things back, letting different elements lead and having it all crash together, but again, you could set one of those metronomes up (y'know, that little thing that clicks back and forth to keep tempos - sorry, with some of the music we get here, I feel the need to explain what a metronome is...) and let it go and it would pace any song on here beat for beat. But it's dark and driven. And its source is pure enough. Given some time to focus it and let it breath it's own life before it's creators abandon it, Six could attain the recognition it deserves.

Bushman

Division of Laura Lee

"Black City"

(Burning Heart)

With bands like The Strokes and The White Stripes making headlines doors begin to open for others with that same kinda sound. The Division of Laura Lee happens to be one of them. The album "Black City" contains 12 tightly wound retro-punk tunes along the lines of The Hives mixed with some of The Stooges feel. This Swedish foursome will make you dance and thank god that "rock music is still alive". The lyrics are pretty good and the music is up-tempo. The thing I enjoyed most about the lyrics was a line that said, "I'm not your toy for penetration". Overall I would say that The Division of Laura Lee's Black City album is good. Think Joy Division/ My Bloody Valentine.

Lucas

Bloodjinn

"Leave This World Breathing"

(Goodfellow Records)

The album sounded promising with a nice little lick lifted from the introduction to Deathrow's "Deception Ignored" and followed up with a chugging guitar reaching a crescendo in the introduction of the onslaught of the drumming and vocals. Both of which then proceed to ruin the album after only thirty seconds. The production on the drums is strictly pickle bucket played in the basement and the raw death metal vocals sound like they were recorded with a unidirectional microphone inserted in the drummer's butt as opposed to in front of the singer's mouth. But then again, maybe I should give them their production foibles a break. They do write honest, straight forward death metal and lord knows you'll have a hard time finding that anywhere else. What choice do you have really? I mean, we're practically in the midst of the great death metal drought of double ought two and ain't nobody gonna pass up the chance for death metal in the current famine. Please, people, listen to my plea, if you play an instrument or think you might be able to play an instrument after a couple hours of practice then please, form a death metal band today. The world needs one. You and your uncle can start the next great wave of death metal. Hurry! Apply today. Bloodjinn are very talented and have a clever name.

DICK

As I Lay Dying / American Tragedy

"Split CD"

(Pluto Records)

Angry makes me happy. There's nothing like a little kicking and screaming to get you fired up. But why would anyone in Southern California be angry? It's not some ramshackle, dirty downtown battleground, consuming people and nature with gruesome vigilance. It's Club Med at the beach with the mildest weather in the United States. But I guess some of the people make me angry, so that's a good reason. And what some people in San Diego have spawned are two hardcore metal monsters in As I Lay Dying and American Tragedy. Both of these bands rip, one heavier and one more technical, both metallic hardcore. Just like all the best. To start, As I Lay Dying grind through five songs of wonderfully melodic heaviness, throttling the listener with thick-as-mud guitars and a growling vocalist who must be related to Satan. Bringing up the rear, American Tragedy craft technical crunch on their five tracks. Blasting riffy, metallicore wizardry with a throat-searing yellman at the microphone. Both heavyweights incorporate a sparse usage of vocal harmonies into their brutal music, while still maintaining the highest level of aggression. Much like Poison The Well. And like PTW, both understand how to keep heavy music fresh and interesting. Who would have thought that this beachfront vacation town would breed two of the best bands in underground metal? Thank you San Diego.

smc

The Boston Massacre Part II

"5 Band Rodent Popsicle Comp"

(Rodent Popsicle Records)

For the pure punk in you, this is the shit. All of these songs were previously only available on 7" vinyl. What's vinyl? I KNOW there is some 12 year old kid reading this asking that. If you got to ask, you can't play it. But now you can, all gathered nice and neat on this here CD. Here's the rundown: Toxic Narcotic. 2 Songs. "Asshole" and "Shut The Fuck Up". The attitude reflects the song titles. Fast as fuck punk rock that rips through you like one of those AM/PM burgers. 'Experienced' garage punk rock. A Global Threat: (2 songs) Again, super fast, rather tin high guitars, crank it through punk rock. The Profit$: A band whose name is fun to type cause you get to use that $ symbol, and contributes 5 songs to this comp. A girl singer who leads this fearlessly (although there is a guy singer in there who steps up a lot and even leads a track or two). A sloppy charm and poli-punk ideals firmly intact, the Profit$ are a worthy addition to any real punkers collection. Tommy and the Terrors: (4 Songs) A more rawk and roll kind of punk. Good intros, standard songs. Yelling singer. You are getting the idea of the meal being served here on this disk. Lost Cause: (8 songs) Singer reminds me of a punk version of Dicky Barret (vocalist for Might Mighty Bosstones) fronting a harder punk, that works doses of pop melodies into guitar lines, making Lost Cause the most danceable, but not most moshable punk band on this comp. This is a meaty and tasty burger, cause each bands offers more than one song. I think my jean jacket grew some metal studs just listening to this.

Bushman

Girls Against Boys

"You Can't Fight What You Can't See"

(Jade Tree)

Y'know what's the coolest thing about Girls Against Boys? They never made it 'big'. Oh sure, they got tons of industry cred and respect all around (12 years and 6 Albums, plus numerous EP's will earn you a devoted following), but they've never 'broke'. The video channels rarely touch them and I never hear them on the radio (aside from cool college and underground stations, and even then, it's rare). So as a long time fan (my first exposure was the 'Cruise Yourself' release and tour circa '93), I appreciate that the mainstream hasn't embraced their moody electro-rock valium trips and sapped the sound for all it's worth. The band truly does have its own sound, hard to compare (qualifying them as genius) and constantly evolving. Except Scott McCloud's vocals. He's eternally on about 3 pills too many and uses a distinctive whisper drawl of a vocal approach that rarely deviates. It sets a slick mood over the scratched and sampled, stripped down and looped vibe the band distills. Eli Janney supplies the sampler and second bass (bass expansion unit supreme) which gives the low end, club funk feel. Perfect for cruising the strip high on various pharmaceuticals. While maintaining expected formulas, this release is a bit more raw and 'song' orientated and not as glossy as their brilliant previous release 'Freak-on-ica'. Much of the material kind of pounds away on a straighter direction, which is a shame, cause I believe most people are attracted to GvsB for their eclectic use of sounds. It feels restrained and not as experimental as the rest of their catalog consistently strived to achieve. Solid song writing is undeniable, this just lacks the sonic hallucinations their music used to induce. Someone slipped me a placebo with this one.

Bushman

Fear Factory

"Concrete"

(Roadrunner Records)

A new Fear Factory album? NO! WRONG! They broke up, remember? This is never released before, original FIRST album, produced by Ross Robinson back in 1991. The long time Fear Factory fan will recognize eight of the songs as they were re-recorded for their debut album "Soul of a New Machine". This is a must for any true Fear Factory fan. It's brutal, gruff and raw. Burton hasn't developed his 'howl' yet and is almost dismissible at times as just another gravel throated cookie-monster. The band is still into blast beats treading into grind and death metal territory. Mechanical sounds are (not so subtly) slapped over sections, hinting at the techo-hybrid their music would hit a crescendo with when they released 'Obsolete'. There is a brutality in a pummeling of sound on some of these 10 year old tracks that shadowed what a lot of today's bands are still churning out as new metal. The general song writing approach of 'Concrete' is pretty substandard fare compared to where the band ended up, but looking in hindsight, I find this little history lesson of a metal band quite interesting and worthy of digesting. Even if won't get yanked out of the pile as much as "Demanufacture". Now THAT'S some fucking Fear Factory. But here are the roots. Pulled from a time capsule and never heard before now. What an affordable lesson in metal history.

Bushman

From Safety to Where

"Irreversible Trend"

(Radical Records)

If you were to take Fugazi's "Repeater" and put it in a blender along with a Refused CD you'd really mess up your blender. I just bought a new blender, as a matter of fact. I like to make margaritas and walk around without a shirt and listen to Jimmy Buffett. I'd rather listen to Jimmy Buffett than From Safety to Where because I already have enough emo-slash-punk-slash-whatever records and this one doesn't seem to warrant a spot in my CD case. "Irreversible Trend" really does remind me of "Repeater" and a bit of older Refused too, I wasn't just making stuff up earlier. There are lots of instrumentals between the sporadic choruses which is conceivably a good idea; you'd think it would allow the audience ample time to fully digest the subtle ruminations of the singer. In this instance however, From Safety to Where's vocalist (sadly un-named in the jacket) doesn't really contribute much in the way of ruminations, as this snippet from "Leaving Early" will attest: "Another way I feel so strange / When you're with me / I feel so strange again today". Huh? Come again? Is that what passes for ruminations these days? Of course, you'd have to imagine ten or twenty seconds of angular guitar work and brooding bass interspersed between each line. No thanks.

Brian Greenaway

Mclusky

"mclusky do dallas"

(Too Pure)

Made to be played in a dive bar or your garage, but recorded at Abbey Road "mclusky do dallas" is fourteen crazy ass fuzz rock anthems from the UK. This album left me feeling completely brain dead. Not a full frontal lobotomy brain dead, but an I've got a really bad hangover and no sunglasses brain dead. There is an obvious Pixies, Dinosaur Jr. and Ween type concoction with "mclusky do dallas." I really like the bass line in "fuck this band" and "alan is a cowboy killer." However, the best part about this Cardiff three-piece is the off the wall lyrics. The beginning of "to hell with good intentions" is funny as shit with the opening lines 'my love is bigger than your love, we take more drugs than a traveling funk band." Judging by the rest of the album, I'd say this is true. In another track, "the world loves us and is our bitch," it starts "you need some cokecokecokecoke inspiration, for your seven year itch," and later states, "accidents happen where the rain won't go, god is a colour that we can't let go, and faith is admission that we just can't win." Change your life, no, inventive as hell, fuck yeah.

Tom

Drag The River

"Closed"

(Upland)

I'm partial to CD reviews that get straight to the point. Would I recommend owning this album? Absolutely. If like me, you came up enjoying the Alt Country pathos found in music by Gram Parsons, Steve Earl, or Uncle Tupelo you'll be drawn to Ft. Collins, Colorado's Drag The River. Once there it's amazing to discover that DTR is in effect a side project of sorts for guys who's lineage and day jobs include The Decendents, ALL, The Nobody's and Armchair Martian. In homage to Big Black's carnal opus, this release could have easily been titled "Songs About Drinking". From "Medicine" where "She's cranky when she's sober, so sweet when she's wasted." To the third track that claims forgiveness would be traded for a beer. "Barroom Bliss" sure doesn't disappoint with lines like "Drink all my waking hours away." Or even "Disclaimer (Pts. 2 &1)'s" slow 3/4 time that pulls the lyrics "With pills to help the alcohol heal" from deep within a mired psyche. It's not hard to believe these guys have " spent my life starin' through my bloodshot eyes." Overall the production values are tight without delving into syrup or schlock. Jon Snodgrass (Armchair Martian) and Chad Price's (ALL) vox and backing vox are engaging, warm, and golden shower smooth. The pedal-steel of Zach Boddicker sweetly serpentines through the vocal duo's six string strumming. Bassist J.J. Nobody (The Nobody's) nicely opts to keep the low-end thick and round, while Paul Rucker (Armchair Martian) stays solid and tasty on the drums. Witness a marathon session of ghosting beats on "Losin' Everyone" that showcases Rucker's aptitude for this country-fried style. A welcome surprise on the über-strong closing track "Smokefinger" is trumpeter Darryl "Doody" Abrahamson (Psychodelic Zombiez), who adds an extra lift to the tonality of the other instruments. It's also evident that attention was paid to the soundstage during the mixing of the album, which is heaven to audiophile geeks like me. Nope, not bad at all for a side project. Actually, "side project" my ass. There's far too many full time bands who would kill to have an album this complete in their repertoire.

Dave Olsen

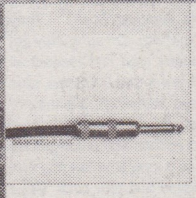
Arkham

"Mahkra"

(Volcom Entertainment)

"Where do we begin?" are the lyrics that scream at the albums start, and have me wondering the same question. Arkham's first track "Glazed Over" offers a repetitive beat that by mid song turns into a headache. The same words and phrases are said over and over again "microphone," "Truth," and "where do we begin?" The vocalist's squelching is horrible throughout the album and just when it starts to maybe get better it's ruined by an almost gurgling scream of dying. It's almost as if they're trying to mimic an existing style rather than be themselves. The music in the background of all this vocal chaos is fast paced, hard, punk rock with a metal edge. "Better Than Me" picks up with some potential as the heaviest track on the album with furious guitars and drums - there's a ton of energy in this one song, Arkham should have dispersed their energy more evenly and perhaps this album would make more sense.

Skye



Sugarcult

"Start Static"

(Ultimatum Records)

This album has been out since early this year and I'm kind of glad it was lost in the sea of CDs at Modern Fix and I get the opportunity to talk about it now. "Start Static" is in the top three of my favorite albums of '02. Each and every song is just perfect. Their first single "Stuck in America" was originally released just before Sept. 11 and was one of the many songs taken off the radio because of the lyrics "everybody's talking 'bout blowing up the neighborhood." "Bouncing off the Walls" with it's poppy, up-beat, sing-song front found it's way to be the title track of the "National Lampoon's Van Wilder" movie, and continues to be their radio and MTV2 hit. Although "Bouncing off the Walls" seems to be so happy - actually listening to the lyrics proves it's actually about doing cocaine. "Lost In You" is Sugarcult's version of a love song, and it works, the girls love it. "Hate Every Beautiful Day" starts off with the sound of powerful guitar thrusting, quick drums then rather somber vocals - which transition into an almost helpless round of screams. "Pretty Girl (The Way)" is an attempt to jump into the head of a female and view, for once, how she is feeling in a broken relationship. "Crashing Down" and "I Changed My Name" swing into mellow mode as the album comes to an end. In between the two more serious tracks lies "How Does It Feel" which carries a more rock 'n' roll sound. All around an excellent album that includes every possible element for greatness.

Skye

Red Harvest

"Sick Transit Gloria Mundi"

(Relapse Records)

Brutal techno/electronic drenched grind and thrash, heavily metallic industro-crush and bark type of musical oblivion. The percussive elements are usually pummeling dumptrucks of rhythm, unrelenting and tempo pushing. A good bulk of this album trods along singular ideas, which are always interesting enough, but a lot of this just doesn't show the dynamics I heard on their previous release, "Cold Dark Matter". Atmospheric and indulgent passages sweep along, creating a rhythmic, flowing wall of abrasion, drenched in effect and reverb. Interesting enough for the textural value, but starts to become an endurance test on the patience and ears, waiting for the song to fall into an ugly crash of ripping guitars and bastardized electronic noises, twisted into a rhythmic force and proclaimed 'music'. It just doesn't happen enough on this release. If you've never heard of this band, I'd recommend their previous "Cold Dark Matter" and maybe sample "Sick Transit Gloria Mundi" if your are REALLY into the electro/brutal hybrids. Especially the ones that limit themselves to a musical range their band is capable of blowing out of, but just never gets the guts to take the risks.

Bushman

Iron Savior

"Condition Red"

(Noise)

Here it goes, I'm going to write this review all whilst having to take a very serious and imminent shit that I'm barely strong enough to hold back. Iron Savior opens their album with some little guitar squeals and rapid slides up the neck. You know you're in store for virtuoso high caliber metal now. The band appears to be fronted by an anemic Vin Diesel in a leather jacket who sings like his testicles have been clutched (one each) in a particularly brutish lobster's claws. I find his caterwauling amusing but you won't find me laughing out loud (LOL :) At his most inspired he comes a few yards shy of tackling Rob Halford while at his worst he's Udo Von Dirkschneider after a hit of helium. The band's guitarists also have an affinity to achieve Judas Priest levels of pizzazz as the influence of Glen Tipton and K.K. Downing are thickly slathered over every last damn lick, riff and chug-a-chug-a-chug-chug. For lovers of heavy metal in a classic vain you could do a lot worse than Iron Savior but you could also do yourself a whole hell of a lot better and if you're going to buy this lovely little musical fart then you'd better hurry because it contains two limited edition bonus tracks. Why does it contain two limited edition bonus tracks? Fuck if I know. What makes those particular two songs so important that they should only be available for a special small amount of time? I'll never tell. Uh-oh. I no longer have to shit. Where did all the shit go? Once again, I'll never tell.

DICK

Bouncing Souls / Anti-Flag Split

"BYO Split Series Volume IV"

(BYO Records)

Getting two different bands in the same genre to cover six of each others songs is a great idea, but Bouncing Souls and Anti-Flag? It's so crazy it just might work. And it does! This is another chapter in the latest of BYO's 'I cover you, you cover me' series, and as usual, it's pretty decent. Speaking of decent, what really a bonus is that they include stuff to read in the booklet (history, lyrics etc) which is unusual for (for lack of a better word) novelty albums, although this is far from being a one spin record. Bouncing Souls cover "Punks in Vegas", "No Security", "That's Youth", "Bryan's Lament", "We're Coming Back", and "Less Than Free" in the typical BS style: fucking rad. Anti-Flag does "America Got it Right", "Smash it to Pieces", "No Borders, No Nations", "Gifts From America: With Love, the U.S.A", "The Freaks, Nerds & Romantics" and "Ever Fallen in Love" very well, following the same tempo but giving it the AF touch. Very excellent release; fan's of Bouncing Souls and/or Anti-Flag should pick this up.

PR!

TAKING THE SCENE BY STORM

The Conflict
FALLING CYCLE

FR024

The highly anticipated debut release, "The Conflict" from Southern California's FALLING CYCLE. Top notch European metal influenced hardcore. Intricate guitar work in the vein of IN FLAMES meets the all out brutality of HATEBREED or ALL OUT WAR! Pure aggression topped off with incredible production make this CD one of the finest debut releases ever!

Nodes of Ranvier

FR027

Hailing from Sioux Falls, SD, NODES OF RANVIER are putting the mid west on the map with this amazing debut release that mixes metallic hardcore with melodic songwriting! A showcase of true versatility!

POINT OF RECOGNITION
Day Of Defeat

FR025

The newest and heaviest album yet from P.O.R. Blistering fast hardcore fury with breakdowns of brutal proportions! For fans of Hatebreed and Merauder.

HANOVER SAINTS
TRUTH RINGS OUT

FR026

IN YOUR FACE OLD-SCHOOL HARDCORE WITH A STRONG STREET PUNK FEEL TO IT! CROSS EARLY SICK OF IT ALL WITH THE BUSINESS, BOUNCING SOULS, AND THE COCKNEY REJECTS!

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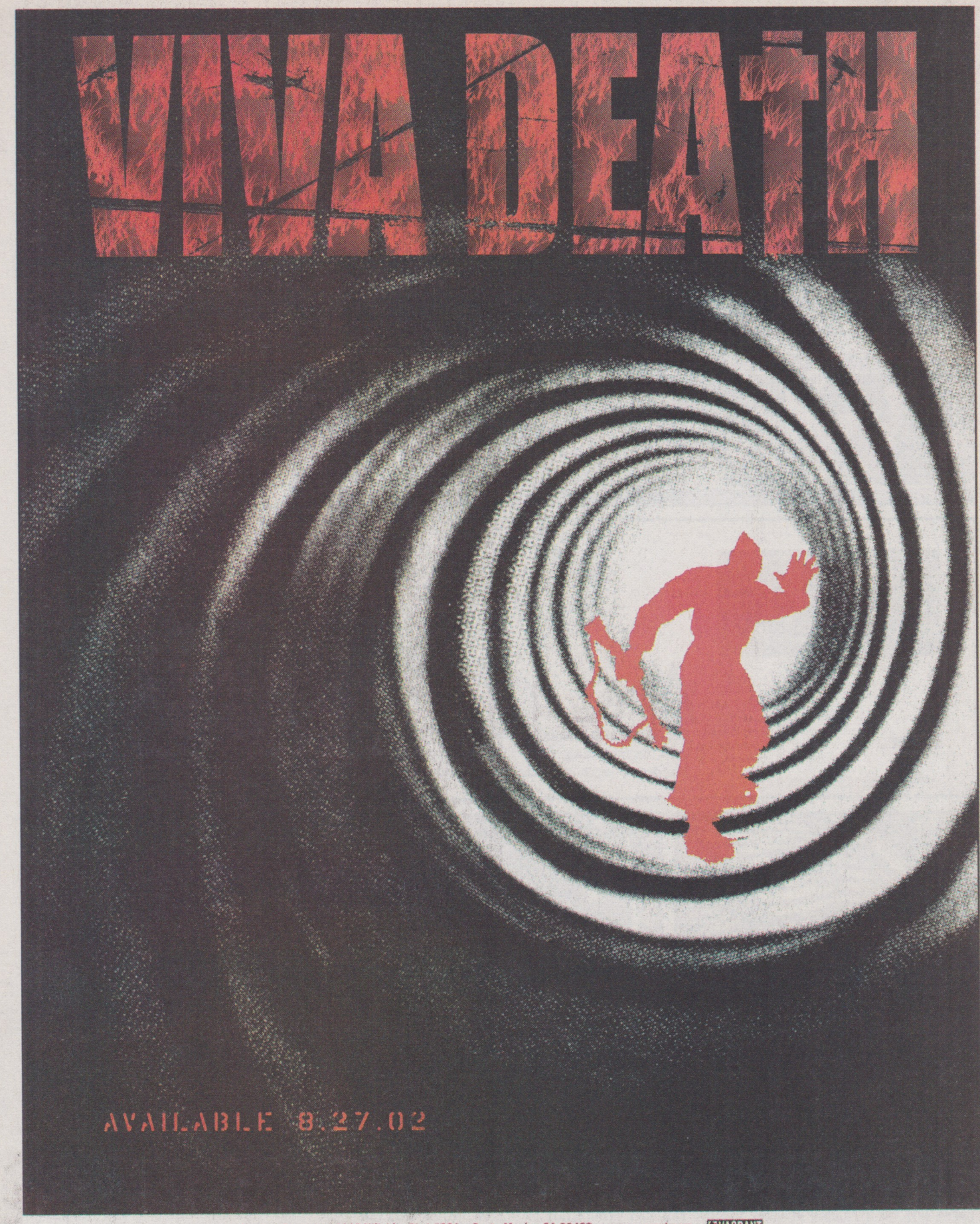

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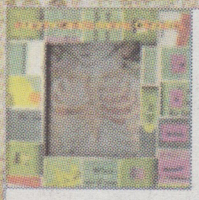
Keepsake

"Black Dress in a B movie"

(Fearless Records)

"Black Dress in a B movie" is probably the best record this band has put out. The vocals are so much better then their previous albums. The recording is really good and produced also. The track titled Ticket to Russia, is one of my favorites on the album. Singer, Shane Halpern has shown so much growth, I am pretty sure keepsake has found and mastered their sound in their latest release Black Dress in a B Movie. Think New Found Glory with Passion, Ozma but good, Finch minus the annoyance and you will end up with Keepsake and "Black Dress in a B Movie". The one thing about the album that disappointed me was no screaming. It is one of those CDs that grows on you and with every listen you like it more.

Lucas



Pretty Girls Make Graves

"Good Health"

(Lookout! Records)

Indie rock of the highest caliber. Dual guitars push and pull the music, while singer/lyricist Andrea Zollo stretches over the top as she deftly combines the sweetness of a female voice, with some angst, aggression and attitude. Her vocals have limitless personality. Backing vocals come shouting along in all the right places. The occasional twinge of keyboards spice up an intro. While not revolutionary in sound, Pretty Girls Make Graves seem to skirt easy comparisons while not being elitist. In fact, there is an easy to swallow pop sensibility being bullied around their songs, with crafty efforts to keep structures and breaks fresh without beating them into the ground with repetition. The guitars expertly play in and out of each other and give this the overall 'rocking' feel, tempered with moody layers of rolling and crashing drums. And then I heard, "The Get A Way" as I walked alone at night with headphones. A brilliant song that gives the listener that funny feeling of 'this music is important'. Kind of a cross between painful reminiscing and optimistic future prospecting. A commanding, rolling drum line brings the track in with a hiccup of high note guitars playing through as the listener is teased by little repeated lyrics that die off in subtle coo's of Zollo's finest soft voice. I dig the small, 60 second electronic, almost midi remake of the song that serves as the following track (but sounds like the end of "The Get A Way" song if you aren't paying attention). "Do you remember what the music meant?" pleads the opening track "Speakers Push The Air" while the bass stutters on a jackknifed tempo. It's the sentimentality of music as entity, held tightly by each and every one of us. Band names worn like badges of courage, surviving the battles of nights defined by the music we experienced. Pretty Girls Make Graves captures that within their music. Their worth is elevated and world is a better place.

Bushman

As Friends Rust

"A Young Trophy Band In the Parlance of Our Times"

(Equal Vision Records)

Let's set something strait, As Friends Rust have been putting out great albums since the birth of the band in 1996. They are one of the most underrated Hardcore/Indie bands out there. On their latest EP, "A Young Trophy Band in the Parlance of Our Times" they continue to innovate and impress. The song "Born With A Silver Spoon up Your Ass" is a perfect example of their past releases. Singer Damien Moyal's lyrics are great and his range between singing and screaming is perfect. Unfortunately this was Damien's last release with the Rust. I suggest you go out and buy this release and all their previous albums. Goddamn Florida!! They always produce the best bands.

Lucas

18 Visions

"Vanity"

(Trustkill)

Hardcore with the edges smoothed out in all the right places. Or, incredibly aggressive indie rock. Vocals that can peal the paint or rally the lyrics with clarity. Impressive range that really shows how much more a hardcore band can achieve with a vocalist who has some talent. But past fans fear not, Jimmy's hard as nails yelp is still intact, it just laced with a more spoken shout, and a razor clean yell for the big impact choruses. Musically this walks a beautiful line between relentless pummels of crushing riffage and more melodic indie rock constructions. Hatebreed comparisons are valid in the guitar attack, but the vocals are of a higher nature and are shooting for an entirely varied approach. 18 Visions should tour with Atreyu. Fans of Diecast's hardcore meets metal hybrid should find a kindred spirit in 18 Visions. Speed blasts of guitar and drums surface often to show the intensity of the extreme metal influence warping this hardcore outfit out of control. Song after song caught me off guard with its sheer intensity. The 10% of songs that break out into something you might hear on the radio show the band could play it clean with talent enough to hit the airwaves, but would rather bitch slap the songs around and scream and agitate their own aggressive creation. This gets so metal at times, it seems to almost to explode. This shatters the shell of hardcore and with that peppering of melodic pretty, gives 18 Visions a shine that blinding. The only improvement might be a more engaging production, as the songs heavy guitars all hit with the same tone. The last, uncredited track is a surprise with its dreamy guitars and sway of dripping, breathy vocals. Layers of echo on everything and it sweetly jams in a loud Fuel meets late career Pink Floyd sort of way. Out of step with this release, but a convincingly dulcet number I commend them for including. It basically justifies the tear your head off line of attack the sonics on this album command as a chosen path 18 Visions proudly travels, even though the golden path of radio and money would obviously be available to them.

Bushman

The Forsaken

"Arts of Desolation"

(Century Media)

This is an excellent technically efficient death metal album with high marks for production values and cover art. The guitars perform a dual blistering "stereo-phonic" attack, which is greatly appreciated in this age of standardized mono. It's also nice to see a death metal band in 2002 releasing their album on CD (compact disc) after this long wave of eight-track releases. Finally, the record companies have wised up. Eight tracks simply are not the appropriate format for death metal. That kind of shit might fly for Brittany Spears' fans, but who wants to be smack dab in the middle of rocking out to Deicide's first album and half way through "Carnage in the Temple of the Damned" the song stops, one hears the chunk of the reel switching tracks and then the song resumes? This album by the Forsaken is bound to start a new trend in the way music is recorded and distributed in the new millennium. I hope other labels catch on to (Century Media's) paradigm shifting innovation.

DICK

The Black Keys

"The Big Come Up"

(Alive)

The Black Keys are an outstanding art-punk damaged, blues/garage two-piece from Ohio that somehow manage to not sound like the bands that immediately come to mind when you hear such a description. In other words they aren't another John Spencer take off, Doo Rag or Cash Money (Audio). The Black Keys actually owe more to Howlin' Wolf than 80's punk, but carry their white boy soul off with the freshness and energy of a couple of kids ready to scrap with Shellac. Dan Auerbach didn't teach himself to play the blues out of a book either. This guy actually knows what he's doing and is rumored to have been schooled by some seasoned veterans. Surprised Orange Records or Fat Possum isn't beating their door down to sign 'em. Touring the West Coast soon, so watch out!

Zack

Sick Of It All

"Live in a Dive"

(Fat Wreck Chords)

Live Sick Of It All recorded at Bottom of the Hill in San Francisco. This is the third installment of the "Live in a Dive" series from Fat Wreck. The other two being from No Use For A Name and Bracket. What's neato, is there is a comic book that accompanies these releases. Hard to find the tie in with the band on this one, but it's cool none the less. And music? 24 Live Sick of it All songs. It's raw enough to capture the direct intensity of a band like SOIA, but quality enough to hear a reasonably balanced representation of a live sound. Which, for the uninitiated, is straight ahead hardcore with occasional bro hymn singalongs. There are two types of 'whoa-oahhs' in this world. The kind that Jimmy Eat World do on "Sweetness" (ruining a great crash of guitar and basically saying 'I have nothing to say here so I'll do some verbal masterbation'), and then there's the kind that bands like Sick of it All and Pennywise use to rally the crowd into singing with them. There's an inclusion of belief among the Sick of it All fans and you can feel that on this release, even if the music is pretty singular in its approach. Solid, but singular. Only the true fan would be able to pick out song from song (this is a live slosh of hardcore no matter how pristinely it's recorded) and vocals sound... live. Again, if you don't know the songs in the original versions... you'll feel the vibe but you'll miss on the craft of some good hardcore as 24 songs seem to slip by with a very similar feel. Worthy live stuff for the fan, especially for the sheer number of tracks. And see if you can get yours with a comic.

Bushman

El Nada

"Nothing For Nobody"

(Finger Records)

Punk Rawk!!! El Nada sings, "Surf Skate" and baby, I'm from Orange County and that's all I wanna do! They nailed it on that one. Rather enjoyably I listen to the super quick guitars and short but sweet lyrics in "Hero" and "G Spot." Even a little poke at the USMC...so fucking cool? Maybe I don't agree whole-heartedly but I can agree with "Police Chase" - word. El Nada's explosive intros into every song, quick vocal style with machine gun drums and furious guitars - I'm in love. "Fuck" what a great song title, and big surprise it's about some whore (or something like that). No one can say punk rockers are uneducated as proven in El Nada's, "Suits and Politics." El Nada has a lot to offer and I bet they're fucking awesome live too! And in closing I would like to say "Bums get a job!!!" Yeah!!!!

Skye

The Fartz

"Injustice"

(Alternative Tentacles)

It's been a long time since 1982. I bought a copy of The Fartz, "World Full Of Hate" that summer from the Record Co-op at the University of Maryland. I put it on cassette so I could skate to it at the Riverdale ditch. Those blazing fast punk nuggets were the perfect addition to a dusty and sweaty skate jam. Twenty years later, Blaine Cook and his gaseous cohorts are back to burn the hair off your ass again. Fifteen explosive punk blasts recorded over two days with the inimitable Jack Endino. Sounding like an awesome live set, the tone is rich and full, moreso than I remember from my Fartz cassette, and I love it. Every song here scorches from beginning to end. Never wasting more than 2 and half minutes on one idea. The licks these old-timers use are astounding, creating the necessary energy to match their aggression. Backed by the blistering guitars, the harsh, practically unintelligible vocals revitalize this Motorhead-speed Seattle junk-punk, giving us a lesson in hardcore history and reminding us how good it used to be. And with song titles like, "Rich White American", "Apathy Is The Enemy", "What Do You Stand For", "God Fearing Christians" and Discharge's "State Control" you realize The Fartz haven't lost their political edge either. What's better than a cover of Discharge? Not much. These guys sound just as vital and important as they ever did, even after two decades. But some people might only know The Fartz because Duff McKagan (Guns and Roses) played drums for them. That's what I call injustice.

smc

A Family Affair

NORTH SIDE KINGS

A Family Affair

NORTH SIDE KINGS are back again to issue one more sonic shakedown of traditional hardcore and catchy street punk. Heralding such imperatives as hunting down your debtors and eating big Italian meals, the NSK crew hasn't changed a bit. NSK play hardcore for those who got balls.

FOR FANS OF: Blood For Blood, Hudson Falcons, and Death Threat

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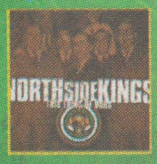


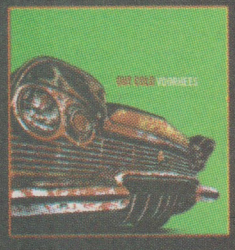
THIS THING OF OURS

FINAL PLAN/MY LUCK "Closed Casket Secrets" split CD

Texas hardcore kings MY LUCK deliver a fast dose of pissed off, introspective hardcore, while Cleveland's THE FINAL PLAN amaze with their eclectic hardcore array of interesting riffs and passionate lyrical charges.

FOR FANS OF: American Nightmare, Hope Conspiracy, and The Dedication

FINAL PLAN
MY LUCK



OUT COLD VOORHEES

OUT COLD/VOORHEES split MCD

Two of hardcore's underground heroes go at it with a vengeance to showcase their merits of fast, socio-political hardcore punk. OUT COLD bring the Boston perspective, while VOORHEES hail from England.

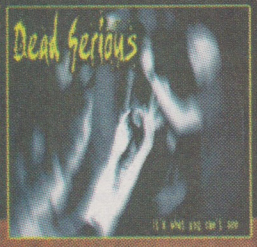
FOR FANS OF: American Nightmare, Striking Distance, and Poison Idea

DIEHARD YOUTH "Without The Kids We Would Be Dead"

Musically mixing hard driving riffs, circle pitting speed, melodic breaks, and catchy sing-a-longs, CA's DIEHARD YOUTH bring back the spirit of youth crew hardcore like no other..

FOR FANS OF: Carry On, Champion, 7 Seconds, and Dag Nasty.

DIEHARD YOUTH



Dead Serious

DEAD SERIOUS "It's What You Can't See"

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moneen

"The Theory of Harmonial Value"

(SMALLMAN RECORDS)

Every year I try to find at least one emo record that truly becomes a part of me and really defines what emo is all about. Back in 1988 it was Rites Of Spring and the newly formed Samiam. Today both those bands are gone (Samiam might come back), but they live on in bands like .moneen.. I started listening to emo in about 1994 with Seaweed, Jawbreaker, and Jawbox so you might call me a longtime fan. I would say it is still my favorite type of music because of bands like Moneen. The band has created the best emo record I have heard in years. After being left in awe by the first listen to "The Theory of Harmonial Value" I immediately started the disk over like it is my daily fix of crack. The lyrics are insightful and delivery ranges from soft finesse to powerful soul driven emotion. Yes, the songs actually build up and climax, can you believe it? I can't find one weakness in this record. I hear hints of all the greats such as Hum, The Promise Ring, caP'n Jazz, Sunny Day Real Estate, Mineral and the before mentioned. These guys are very young so get started on Moneen early and make them a personal part of yourself.

Tom

Seven Nations

"And Now it's Come to This"

(RAZOR & TIE)

Top o' tha mornin' to ya, Shamus McDougald O'Finnigan here wit' a new compact disc from Seven Nations; five o' tha finest lads ta use tha bagpipes an' 'lectric guitars this side of Floggin' Molly. O', sure 'nuf there be loads of bands usin' traditional instruments to augment their substandard fare. This one, sure 'nuf, inn't one 'o them. The music here is finer than a clear day on Lough Neagh an' Kirk McLeod's (a fine Scottish name) vocals are ever' bit as pretty as young Shannon McSheenan from tha li'l village outside Edinburgh. An' it's no' just myself that's been impressed with Seven Nations great body o' work, either. No, the Yanks across the pond hired them to play at both tha start o' tha New York marathon and the Winter Olympics Torch Arrival Ceremony, sure 'nuf. I gather it must be a wee bit rough to combine folk, rock, an' the traditional instruments like fiddles an' such, but I'd never know it from listenin' to this release. The angry whine o' the 'pipes never sounded so urgent as it does when meshed with tha driving guitars on "Up to Me", a rollickin' good tune that would have had William Wallace and Longshanks cuttin' a rug together for sure. Good times, laddie.

Brain Greenaway

Murderdolls

"Beyond The Valley of the Murderdolls"

(Roadrunner)

Some sad unfortunates will probably eat this horribly banal bullshit up like it was a Whopper after a ten day fast. And you know what happens if you gobble up a Whopper after a ten day fast? You blow filthy barely digested bits of Whopper up all over the damn place, and that's pretty much what this album does. It's a sickening waste of noisy time, an affront to the civilized and self-obsessed Hollywood driven bilge. Fuck this creatively bereft crap. What the Murderdolls evidently want to be is a cross between the worst of eighties glam like the L.A. Guns and the worst of late nineties Nu Metal like, oh, say... Static X, someone of whom from that latter band is in this band so go figure. I love it when one person can be in two bands that are a waste of perfectly good digitally encoded aluminum. The screaming vocals holler, "People hate me and you can all fuck off." My recommendation is we all do just that, fuck off and keep our money and ourselves far away from this mess of egotistical self-flagellation.

DICK

Nerf Herder

"American Cheese"

(HONEST DON'S FRIED CHEESE ON A STICK)

What can you say about a band named after collecting Nerf products and accessories? It's bad enough that you are such a wussy that you are forced to use Nerf products, but to be the one to collect them is rock bottom for even the wimps. The third release from Nerf Herder "American Cheese" is the best work I've ever heard from them. But wait, I'd never heard them before so it's not saying much. Nerf Herder is another hopeless rock band with the opening song on a TV show. In this case it is a show I've never seen Buffy The Vampire Slayer. Vampires and hot chicks just don't mix. The topics for the songs are great as they tackle the 80's, becoming a rock superstar, and the hotness of Jenna Bush. My favorite track is "Mr. Spock" because of the great keys and the vocals. The chorus is quite catchy and I would say is good because it is fun and easy to listen to. I just think "American Cheese" lacks the power and drive found in most melodic punk acts with real influence and importance to the scene. I keep on thinking these guys sound like a watered down version of Goldfinger. Nerf Herder are very well known and aren't bad, but definitely not the best thing available.

Tom

Robert Plant

"Dreamland"

(UNIVERSAL)

"Dreamland," in contrast to Robert's eighties hit "Tall Cool One", is a humble album full of musical self introspection by way of covering other musicians' songs, some of the covers are originally by Plant's contemporaries like Bob Dylan. Robert is backed up by a diverse group of performers including ex-Cure guitarist Porl Thompson. Robert's legendary vocal chords are still very much under his own power but gone are the long wails and youthful hyperbole. One can't help being a bit taken with this album for its modest laid back approach. In its own way it feels like Robert is striding forward by not cannibalizing his past but by trying to understand the past of other popular music that was side lined by his devotion to and all the hoopla surrounding Led Zeppelin. Gone is Jimmy page and gone is the grotesquerie of attempting to recapture his past. This subtle and quiet album is welcomed in an age of noise and teenage masturbatory pre-packaged rebellion. The well-worn thoughtfulness of age heard in Plant's careful yet energetic vocals might be able to teach the current glut of young musical dudes out there that there's more to life than foaming at the genitals and walking the stage like a moody runway model exhibiting this years tattoo fashions.

DICK

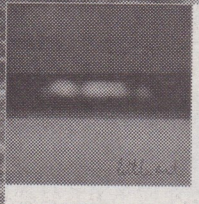
Travoltas

"Endless Summer"

(FASTMUSIC)

This disc comes from the twelve year veterans the Travoltas heralding from the Netherlands. "Endless Summer" is their sixth full-length release and only a small part of their illustrious career outside the US. (Just proves it's hard to crack the US barrier if you aren't British or say you are like The Strokes and many others.) I guess indie music is indie music no matter what country the music is coming from. I imagine these guys are pretty popular close to home. The best way to describe their sound is infectious 60s style surf punk with synth-pop keys. The lyrics are candid and delivered with clarity by lead singer Perry and the music, although a bit power chordy, is greatly improved by the keys and excellent drumming. I really like the title track "Endless Summer" and another instant classic "Liv Tyler" (who I bet they wish would do the video). Fans of Weezer's good music, Teen Heroes, The Rentals and the like will really enjoy this band. Think of The Beach Boys if they grew up in the 70s and 80s and were from Europe and that is the Travoltas. This disc is great so support their invasion by going to your local independent record store and getting their new album "Endless Summer."

Tom



Little Cat

"Self Titled"

(PANDACIDE RECORDS)

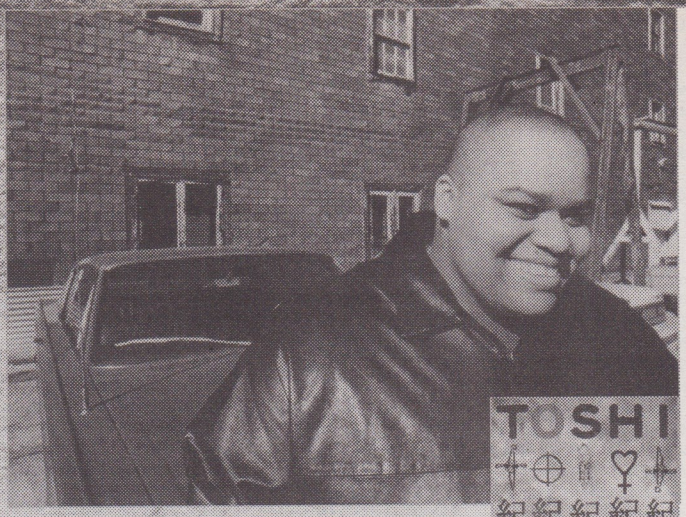
Little Cat is very interesting lo-fi electronic music that's extremely hard to characterize. It seems Devon Rumrill spent some four years (give or take a year) recording this record on VHS and cassette. Devon prefers VHS for its "clear but characteristically imperfect sound." In its own right, this album is a masterpiece. Early recordings for this record were made with non-sequenced Casio samples and later recordings were sequenced. Imagine having to use non-sequenced samples to overdub on a four-track or VHS to make transient electronic music. No wonder it took four years because as a solo project that must have been frustrating. The outcome of DR's hard work is a sound similar to Final Fantasy. I played role playing games a lot when I was a kid and I think the music kicks some major ass. This album sounds like it could be the sound track for a FF game set in the future. I don't know if my mind gets lost in the music or the music gets lost in my mind, but this is !
an unbelievable record.

Tom

Angra
"Rebirth"
(SPV)

The best frame of reference to bracket this album in is Helloween on the top, Helstar on the bottom, rock on the left hand side and a hard place on the right. The band is collapsing under the weight of its ostensible influences. I see nothing terribly wrong with wearing your musical influences on your sleeve and for Angra it almost works as the guitarist volleys from fast frenetic picking to chunkier riffing moments and back again with nary an acknowledgement from the drummer who invariably keeps the pace going at top speed. Too often on this album the band takes a respite from their power metal ways with piano and vocal interludes that attempt to be sincere and atmospheric but ultimately wastes the listener's time like a scene segue in a pornographic movie. Like the connecting scenes where porn stars make small talk destroy an erection so to does Angra's lullabies between hard rocking power metal action cause the spandex pitched tent to fall.

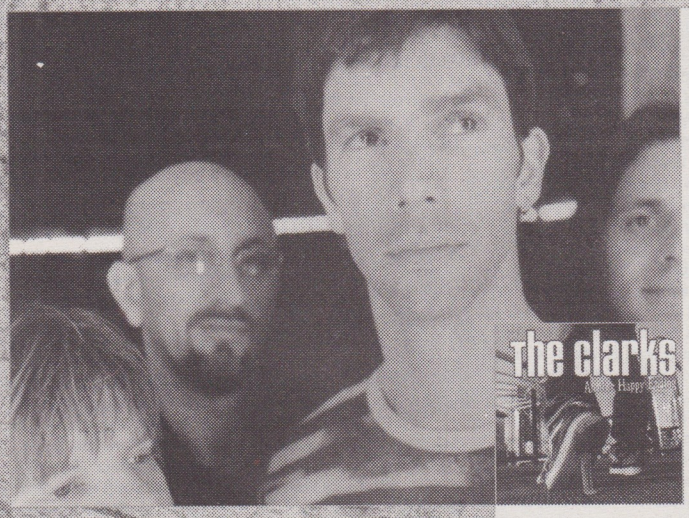
DICK



Toshi Reagon
"Toshi"
(Razor and Tie)

A quote from Toshi Reagon's press kit calls her "a black female Neil Young." Not to pigeonhole anyone by race or gender, but Tracy Chapman would be a much more accurate comparison. Although Toshi's voice is miles away from Tracy Chapman's husky tone, they occupy the same rough area of the musical spectrum. Despite the respectable songwriting chops she displays here, it'sToshi's cover of Ric Ocasek's "Just What I Needed" that will really grab you. It's actually kind of disservice to call it a cover- Toshi and guitarist / backup vocalist Marc Anthony Thompson have reinvented the 80's pop hit as a haunting kind of love song. Anyhow, if you ever like anything Tracy Chapman did, you should check out Toshi as well.

C-Train



The Clarks
"Another Happy Ending"
(Razor & Tie)

There aren't a lot of bands playing rock and roll these days. You've got your popsters, your punkers, your metalheads, etc., but try to find a band that you'd be stoked to hear over the speakers at your favorite bar. You know the bar I'm talking about, too. Not the club downtown, but the seedy tavern around the corner where there's always a game on the television, there are beer stains on the felt of the pool table and you can throw your peanut shells on the floor. Well, you can stop looking because The Clark's "Another Happy Ending" is just that pub-friendly band. Full of Rolling Stones and Elvis Costello craftsmanship, this twelve track LP is sure to keep your feet tapping which will certainly mess up your game of darts. Just try to keep your attention focused on the third-and-seven play in the fourth quarter while the bluesy chords and beautiful violins of "On Saturday" are playing in the background. You'll find yourself perpetually out of quarters as you'll be feeding them into the jukebox just so you can hear Rob James sing "We're breaking up, you're moving out, on Saturday / I'm losing friends, I'm losing face, I'm losing weight / So get your things out of my place, on Saturday" one more time. And maybe, if you're lucky, there'll be a shy little blonde all by herself sipping at her Corona while you hum the lovely lines of "Inside You". Then she'll tell you to get lost because she only dates rock stars. Like the guys from The Clarks.

Brian Greenaway

Noise Ratchet
"Till We Have Faces"
(The Militia Group)

San Diego has got a really good local music scene which has been made possible by bands like Noise Ratchet. I saw these guys in San Diego a while ago and thought they rocked. Money in hand, I was ready to purchase their albums with a "sign me up, I'm in," attitude. Sadly, I found they only had one E.P. and they did not know when their first album would come out. I was really surprised, Noise Ratchet sounded and looked like a polished band that had been around for a while, but instead I was witnessing their upbringing, phat. This album is leaning towards emo-core, which the masses have come to know and love recently. Many labels have taken a "pump out the core while it is still cool" attitude that is destroying what Eminem would call my "snare." However, The Militia Group is a small indie label and I really like this band because of their great sound and in depth melodic, heart felt, and emotional lyrics. The buildups really get my melon bobbing up and down in a transient manner. The title track "Till We Have Faces" has phenomenal guitar riffs and the lyrics are quite obviously from the gut. This band is somewhere near the sound of Alkaline Trio, Osker, and Junction 18. Hey, all you tight shirts (myself included), support this "ripping" So Cal band from San Diego.

Tom

Pinwheel
"Trouble Doll"
(Pinch Hit Records)

The album starts out kinda weak with a "snap your fingers" beat, nod your head and just go with the motions; no real excitement goin' on here. Skip to track two and there's a little more heart in a track titled "Everything." It makes me wanna bust out The Breakfast Club theme song - "Don't You Forget About Me." Pinwheel slowly progresses throughout their album as "Once Upon A Lie" makes staying awake through the first two tracks entirely worth it. "Oh, Charles" is also really fun, but then we hit the downward spiral...let's move along I can't listen anymore.

Skye

Voodoo Glow Skulls
"Steady As She Goes"
(Victory Records)

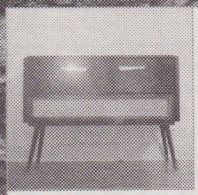
Despite the bold step of producing this album by themselves in their own studio, I have to say the new VGS album has left me completely UNDERwhelmed. They still adhere to their traditional combination of speed punk instrumentals, guttural vocals and a horn section to back them up, but "Steady As She Goes" has very few stand out moments. Essentially every song sounds like every other song, while repetition of the same lyric over and over again in every song got down right annoying. There are a couple tracks that manage to rise above the mediocrity and establish an individual sound, but 3 out of 13 tracks isn't a very good ratio. "One For The Road," has a good instrumental hook and better melody line than most others on the album, but the vocal still has that monotone quality. At least it varies slightly through the course of the song. "Ethnic Cleansing Day" has a very catchy melody and unusual bridge to accompany socially conscious lyrics, although it's kind of hard to make out the words without repeated listens. "The Basketball Song" has THE most interesting instrumentals on the album, but the lyrics consist entirely of "Give me the ball / The basketball." Luckily this is mostly an instrumental track. The requisite VGS cover this time is "Little Red Riding Hood" by Sam The Sham and the Pharaohs. My comment - should have left well enough alone guys and ended on the high note of "The Basketball Song." Strictly for Voodoo Glow Skull fans.

Mary Ellen

Without Face
"Astronomicon"
(Earache)

The music is supposed to be dark, brooding and heavily atmospheric but comes across as melancholy and pretentious. Male and female dual vocals don't help matters either since they both tend to drone and hold out on the same notes for way too long. Somewhat at "earache" dropped the ball on this one. Typically known for signing intense grinding acts of musical devastation, Earache must have decided to expand their catalogue or somebody fucked somebody and that fucking lead to contracts which lead to me having to listen to this crap because of somebody else's cheap climax. The production values on the album are high so whoever took that puerile shot in the dark ended up costing Earache plenty for their carnal misadventure. Hope it was worth it because what you got ain't much more than John Carpenter playing the theme from Halloween on a cheap Casio keyboard while would-be metallers provide would-be accompaniment and a would-be CD reviewer bad mouths it all.

DICK



The Miss
"No Radio"
(Morphius Records)

The Miss is a post punk band featuring past and present members of, The Fuses, The Brogues and Charm City Suicides. The CD "No Radio", delivers 11 songs in 22 minutes. Singer, Hank Baker has a vocal that demands your attention. Again this is one of those CD's that I personally found no connection with but I know people who would like them so I won't throw my 2 cents in. Overall a good CD comparable to The Fall, and Jesus Lizard.

Lucas

Face Tomorrow

"For Who You Are"

(Reflections Records)

I don't care that the press sheet says I should think this band sounds like At The Drive In or Boysetsfire or Radiohead or Thursday or This Beautiful Mess or Muse; I hear Far. And I like Far, therefore I like this, right? Wrong. Face Tomorrow create a slight variation on the modern emotional rock style, featuring post-punk guitars that throb and churn with constant driving energy and mixing frenetic heaviness and subdued beauty. Just like ATDI. Which becomes more and more apparent with every listen. But it's all just a footnote to the singer's overpowering vocal range. And for this indiecore/screamo band out of Rotterdam, The Netherlands, that's the deal-breaker. That, and the fact that even though the band has the ability to play their instruments well and put together interesting songs, the end result is merely a replication of efforts by any number of groups, new and old, including all the bands listed above. People don't want to remember you for who you sound like. They want to remember you for who you are.

smc

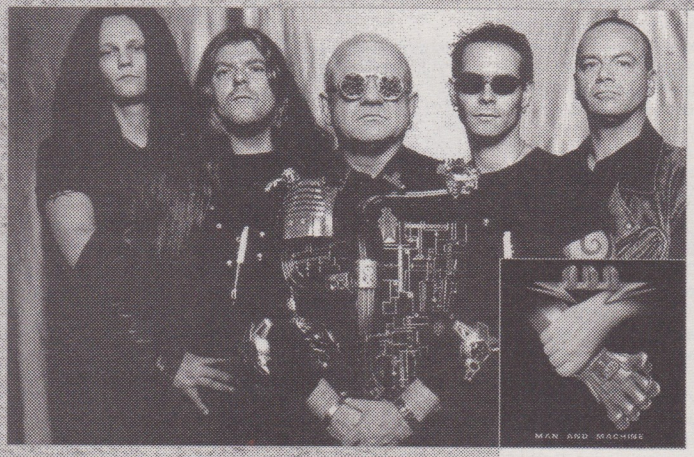
Trik-Turner

"Self-Titled"

(RCA Records)

There's a plethora of thought behind the lyrics on this album. With rap-rock style vocals and beats emerging from guitars to mixers it's like Linkin Park meets Eminem. The radio-played and Trik-Turner hit "Friends & Family" is an easy bob of the head beat set to true-to-life lyrics rapped slowly, smoothly and hit up with a chorus that includes the use of string instruments sets the standard for the album. "Father" portrays a darker more angry-angst infused side of the album as emotions of abandonment and the lack of self worth permeate the track. "New York City" should be played in a pimp mobile riding down some busy street, requires some kind of ass giggling, I can just see the video now. "Not Like You" includes an acoustic guitar and rough vocals backed by the soothing sounds of a violin. It's highly respectable when an artist in one genre can mix in such an array of sounds to make a truly original sound. "Existence," with its rock n' roll sound however is my pick for best track on the album.

Skye



U.D.O.

"Man And Machine"

(SPV)

Udo Dirkschneider, leader of U.D.O., was the frontman for the seminal German metal band Accept who burned up hard rock radio stations with such classic songs as the raging "Fast as a Shark" and Headbanger's Ball anthem "Balls to the Wall." Udo comes from the Bon Scott school of singers and on "Man and Machine" the well-worn pipes of Mr. Dirkschneider hold up incredibly well as he belts forth the lyrics to the title track over a military march drum beat that ought to get the German youth marching in place and banging their fists for this venerable stalwart of heavy metal. Hard to believe the man is still belting it out with such power when, if the pictures in the booklet don't lie, is still smoking those damn lung destroying rank cylinders of weed. U.D.O., the band, isn't that different from Accept. Both offer mid-tempo heavy rocking metal and both offer the unmistakably distinctive vocals of Udo Dirkschneider whose vocal chords belong in the great metal pantheon alongside Bruce Dickinson's, Rob Halford's and Bon Scott's whose vocal chords the Rock And Roll Museum in Sydney Australia have on display in a jar of formaldehyde. Well, they did until I stole them, then my damn cat, Fluffy Buttons, knocked over the jar and ate the sinewy bits of Bon Scott leftover. So I grabbed her by the tail and flung her out into traffic. Stupid fucking cat.

DICK

A Tribute To The Beast

"A Tribute To The Beast"

(Nuclear Blast)

Oh sweet Jesus, a Maiden tribute album. Just how were bands like Cradle of Filth, Grave Digger and Iced Earth going to interpret 16 Maiden classics? I couldn't wait to find out. Or could I? My anticipation was soon turned to a puzzled "what the hell" from the opening track(s), "Ides of March" which pours into "Purgatory" by Steel Prophets. "Please take me away/So far away" whines the familiar chorus. Please take it away, so far away is what was going through my head. The biggest hang-up with this album is the fact you really don't get a flavor for the bands interpreting some great Maiden tunes. You get a disc full of bands trying to sound like Iron Maiden. Technically, "A Tribute To The Beast" is musically sound featuring some of the best speed demons on the circuit, but if you want to hear a band do proper Maiden, save your money and put it towards the door and see Piece of Mind next time they're playing. Now that's a good time. If you're looking for some new twists to some old songs, your shit out of luck, pal. Alas, the disc is not a total travesty. Children of Bodom do good with "Aces High" (dig the solo) as well as Rage and Cradle of Filth blasting their way through "The Trooper" and "Hallowed Be Thy Name", respectively. The disc ends solid with a ballsy "22 Acacia Avenue" by Dark Tranquility and Six Feet Under doing a killer "Wrathchild". Unfortunately, there are 11 other tracks on here that do nothing for me.

Jason Bland

Various Artists

"Songs of Hope and Hatred"

(Sadistic Records)

First of all comps are hard to review because the content is so diverse and some songs are great and others sound like they were fecal matter in a past life. This Comp held a pretty good pace and the reincarnated shit wasn't too much of an issue. Bands that deserve praise are Metalcore's Death before Dishonor, Cloaca, Flashlight Arcade, Torrential Downpour, and Victory Flag and Chernobyl Kids. This comp is pretty good for fulfilling your angriest of moods. Good Hardcore comps are hard to come by, although "Songs of Hope and Hatred" belongs on the side of the good ones.

Lucas

Point of Recognition

"Day of Defeat"

(Facedown Records)

My first car in high school was my grandma and grandpas' old Buick Century. It had a tape deck and a radio that could only pick up a Mexican polka station for some weird reason. It must have weighed about forty thousand pounds. There was nothing subtle about this ridiculously monstrous hunk of American machinery. If that car were a band they would be Point of Recognition. Point of Recognition are heavier than that girl in your class with the gland problem. They are harder than Bob Dole post-Viagra. Pummeling bass and silly-fast drums combined with one of hardcores' most throaty vocalists, Aaron Irizarry, make "Day of Defeat" more dense than a collapsing super-nova. Not to be outdone, Tim Mason's blazing guitar burns through chords like Woody Harrelson at a NORML meeting. Fans of Hatebreed and Throwdown will certainly enjoy this offering more than Rosie O'Donnell would like an oversize box of chocolates. Somebody do me a favor and check to see what the record for most similes and metaphors is in an under 200 word CD review because I think I may have just broken it like...never mind.

Brian Greenaway

Sin In Space

"Asteroid Band"

(Pandacide Records)

This one has been around since 2001. I think this will be real easy to get across. Has anyone ever heard of a band called the Pixies? Sin In Space uses the same formula: hypnotic poppy guitars, lead male and female vocals that are very deliberate, and an off the wall sound. Like the Pixies, Sin In Space has no song that sounds the same. The major difference is that Sin In Space is fascinated with, you guessed it, space. There is even a diagram included with "Asteroid Band" that describes the implosion of the universe. Can't get enough Black Francis, buy Sin In Space.

Tom

Would-Be-Goods

"Brief Lives"

(Matinee)

Easy listening rocky folk songs that stagger and amble along in a pleasant manner and ought to appeal greatly to those fans of "diva" rock and rollers (think Lilith fair) who reside on the folksier side of things. Vocalist, Jessica Griffin, doesn't evoke a significant range with her vocals but by remaining true to her own voice's range, and remaining deceptively relaxed manages to curl up inside one's alimentary canal and gently soothe the cochlea with the sweet buttery kisses of her words like a cat languidly napping on an old ladies lap, playfully sinking its claws into the colostomy bag.

DICK

Impaled
"Mondo Medicale"
(Necropolis Records)

The best record of its kind since Carcass unleashed their "Symphonies of Sickness" opus. Impaled take the name of their album from a series of Italian shockumentaries with such titles as "Mondo Cane" "Mondo Manson" and "Mondo Bizarro." The documentaries were the obvious precursors to the "Faces of Death" videos and delighted in showing their audience the seamy under belly of the world from tribal rituals to nude body painting. "Mondo Medicale" follows in the same tradition as the album cover graphically displays the vivisection of a human being's head in ways we had hitherto only imagined happening to Mary Kaye rabbits. Like Carcass, Impaled's sense of humor, as dark and warped as some may find it to be, is very evident, and despite what many would think, healthy. The songs take the listener on a tour of medical atrocities and malpractices that only the most jaded of Hollywood's vaginal rejuvenation quacks wouldn't find completely offensive. The dual vocal attack is highly effective and their good-natured approach to the stomach churning subject matter quickly warms the listener over to their skewed point of view. Impaled fully delight in their grotesque, medical tome guided grindcore assault. Add that to the album's boast of being banned in 84 countries and fans of dark medical grind clearly have an indispensable record.

DICK

Dr. Chunk
"Self-titled"
(Self Released)

Heavily produced vocals with layer after layer of effects can't save this album from its own incompetence and shitty nu metal sound. And if you think I'm biased because I dislike nu metal then you're right. I don't. Could there ever be a good nu metal album, you might ask. I here and forever go on record as saying "no fucking way," and if it's any good it sure as fuck ain't nu metal. I don't need this shit. Oh great, now the guy is rapping and the guitar player is ripping off the main riff from "Master of Puppets." If you need me I'll be under my bed crying.

DICK

Hoods
"7 Years in Sacramento"
(Knife or Death Records)

Anyone near the bay area and Sacramento knows the Hoods and knows that they have been rockin for a long time. 7 years in fact. This new CD is compiled of old tracks and 5 new ones. The Hoods put on a great live show and their CDs definitely due them justice. They have a New York Hardcore sound with a twist. Key songs on this album are Endless Pain and Life. If you haven't heard the Hoods you're missing out. "7 Years in Sacramento" allows you to see how much this band has grown and it is obvious that they will be around for a lot longer. For fans of Madball and Sick Of it All.

Lucas

Rage
"Unity"
(SPV)

The album opens with a drum and guitar dirge reminiscent of the opening of Diamond Head's "Am I Evil" then plunges into a technically proficient Voivod influenced segue before striking out into a full force avant garde form of European Power Metal that outshines the typically mundane efforts of their peers in the same genre by several million fucking light years. This three piece plays with incredible precision and passion that the listener cannot deny. I haven't heard a single note by this band since their 1988 release "Perfect Man," and in that time they've shaped up beautifully, appear to have smarter lyrical content and a vastly improved technical powerhouse sound that only the bare embryonic beginnings of were heard in the late '80s, but then again the only member still holding over from those early days is bassist/vocalist Peavy Wagner whose distinctive vocals keeps at least a semblance of direct continuity going back to Rage's foundations as Avenger in 1983. I'm not saying this is the perfect album but in the land of power metal it's about as damn close as you're likely to find in 2002, baby. Ya dig?

DICK

In Reply/Who's to Blame
"Split CD"
(Sadistic Records)

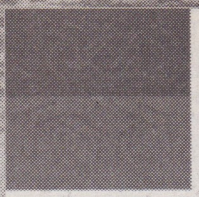
Orange County Hardcore outfit In Reply starts this split off in a major way. Melodic Screamy hardcore is their plan of attack. The song, "Carry Me Away" is great. It has a Poison the Well type feel, and that's always good to hear. The other three tracks are similar. Now for Who's to Blame. They stress the point in their liner notes that they are not a hardcore band. That's like telling an inmate that they are innocent but they have to stay in jail anyway. They are definitely a hardcore band. This isn't a bad thing; they are actually one of the better hardcore bands I've heard as of recent. High pitched screamy vocals and metalish guitar riffs makes their half of the split a good listen. Overall a good CD check it out.

Lucas

Lana Lane
"Project Shangri-La"
(SPV)

Lana Lang? Lois Lane? Lana Lang? Lana Lang was Superman's small town sweetheart back in Smallville but she hooked up with high school footballer beau, Brad. By rejecting Clark Kent's advances and going for the immediate charms of the athletic show off Brad, Lana traded in her future plans for big city success for the comfort and security of the familiar. Of course, Clark Kent left Smallville and headed to the big city of Metropolis where he encountered the second love of his life in the highly ambitious career driven newspaper gal, Lois Lane. Lois is what Lana could have become had she been a risk taker which Lois is to a fault as she is in constant peril and in continuous need of rescuing by Superman. Essentially, the Lois Lane/Lana Lang dynamic is a variant and far more common dichotomy of the old virgin/whore complex. These two aspects of womanhood, woman of the country: child rearing, homemaker and woman of the city: driven, goal oriented is internalized within the body of Superman who lives a life of duality himself as the brave Uber-mensch and the mawkish, craven Clark Kent. The CoUNTry (safe)/city (danger) internalized binary opposition is also found in the band name and woman who leads them, Lana Lane, but what overt seventies influenced, keyboard heavy ballads have to do with Superman comics and the depictions of womanhood found therein, I couldn't tell you.

DICK



Jazzanova
"In Between"
(Ropeadope Records / Atlantic)

Jazzanova is a six-man collective of DJ's and producers hailing from Germany. Although the heavy use of sampling qualifies this as "electronic" music, Jazzanova favors a more jazz-inspired sound, as the name suggests. There are songs on "In Between" that are unmistakable as products of machines ("Soon," for example, sounds like a Pac-Man arcade game long gone on speed- but in a good way), but the bulk of the tracks could have been recorded by an actual jazz ensemble. It's hard to find fault with the work that the members of Jazzanova have done on "In Between." The percussion is ridiculously well-assembled and is complemented by a variety of accompanying samples, ranging from acoustic guitar to woodwinds. The guest vocalists recruited to help out usually do, save for a the poor showings from rappers Capital A ("No Use") and Hawkeye Phanatic ("Keep Falling," which features a much better performance from Ursula Rucker) which divert attention from the tracks themselves. "In Between" is a real piece of work.

C-Train

Nocturnal Rites
"Shadowland"
(Century Media)

I imagine the streets of Sweden must be filled with nothing but metal musicians wandering in roving packs, seeking out practice halls and recording studios. Cafes and diners overflow with tattooed long-haired men guzzling black coffee and slurping cold runny eggs off their plates as they desperately write out song tablature on napkins that cause the ink to bleed and form drippy death metal lettering that'll later finds its way into their band's type font. The members of Nocturnal Force account for six of said such Swedish individuals. They play melodic metal with high-pitched male vocals that I thought were female until noting that "Jonny" isn't all that common a name for women, although it's not unheard of. Also of note, there are two guys in the band named "Nils" which I find odd since I don't know anyone named "Nils." The closest I can come to is David Hyde Pearce's character's name on Frasier, "Niles," but he's a fictional character (Niles, not Dave Pearce) and further, I don't know him. Century Media Records says this album "will satisfy everyone's need for quality, classic metal." Do you dare take the Century Media challenge? I know I sure am satisfied, but that has more to do with typing with one hand than Nocturnal Rites.

DICK

Dillinger 4
"Situationist Comedy"
(Fat Wreck Chords)

Dillinger 4 is perhaps one of the most entertaining bands out of Minnesota. They take the fast edgy styling of political punk rock and smother it with agonizing humor. The song titles alone make you wonder if these guys are sniffing on the Elmers Glue or just have some kind of chemical imbalance. "Situationist Comedy"—whatever that means, is the first debut off Fat Wreck Chords. This follows the 2000 release "Versus God" (Hopeless Records), which is one of my personal favorites. "Situationist Comedy" has all the key elements that make this album a true Dillinger 4 creation. From the rampaging guitar licks to their ear busting lexis, this band is mass destruction to the mind and soul—and I look forward to it. "The Father, The Son, And The Homosexual/Single Parent," ""I Was Born On A Pirate Ship" (really try saying this holding your tongue), "A Floater Left With Pleasure In The Executive Washroom," "D4 = Putting the "F" Back in "Art" are just a few songs that burned a stunning image in my mind but also had me ponder the true meaning of these songs. You see, D4 have incredible way of mixing intelligence with humor and that let alone makes this album completely genuine. They've succeeded once again with this latest release and there is no doubt their next won't be a smash.

Liz Ortega

WARCRAFT III

Platform: PC
Developer: Blizzard Entertainment
Publisher: Blizzard Entertainment
Players: Single Player and Online Multiplayer

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
PII-400, 32MB RAM
500MB HDD
3D accelerator

Player: Davros Kaled

Pros: Full 3D rendering of characters. Great storyline. Nice use of storyline to allow the player to play all the races.
Cons: None. Too fun of a game.

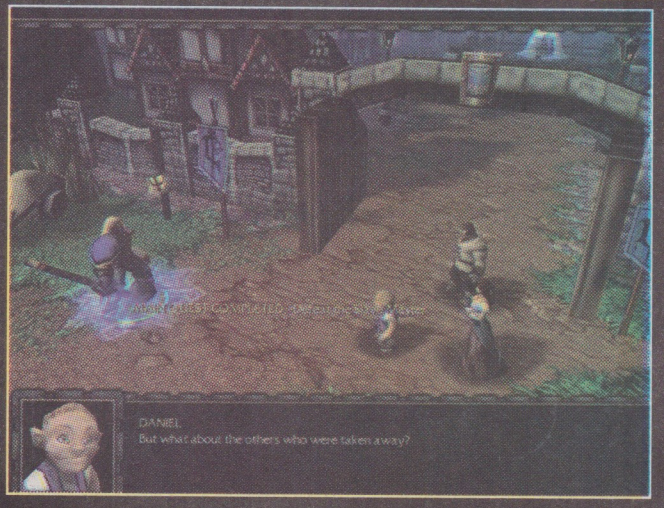
One of the most popular Real Time Strategie (RTS) returns.
To summarize the general idea of a Warcraft game: You have different classes of characters to control (Heroes, peons (workers/builders/gatherers)), various soldiers/grunts and an arsenal of vehicles they are capable of producing through the gathering of resources (wood and gold). Start with a gold mine. Get some gold. Send some grunts to chop down trees for wood. Build a barracks to produce more soldiers. Build farms to produce more food. And so on, building and gathering resources until you can produce your armada. Then skillfully attack the foe, exploiting the strengths and weaknesses of characters.

The storyline is dark, evil and unexpected. It propels the player through the game with both breathtaking cut-scenes. They also utilize the games smooth graphics to animate a few of the minor segues. While previous Warcraft games let you choose which campaign to start the game with, Warcraft 3 allows you to play the different races, but in a certain order that adheres to the storyline and it's unexpected events.

Game play for this RTS is as addicting as ever. Now each race has their own set of heroes that can be used in battle. Heroes differ from regular units in the fact that they grow with you as the game progresses. They earn experience points and can gain in levels. As your heroes' levels increase they will be able to perform more special attacks and have more special abilities. While the special abilities aren't critical to a battles success, when utilized well, can definitely make a few units a lot more deadly. (On the multiplayer level, the Heroes become more critical). The hero acts more as a general in battle adding that extra offensive when needed, and strengthening the grunts sent into battle. The other notable addition to this newest Warcraft is the use of 'upkeep'. As you build your army, it will reduce the amount of gold being drawn from your mines as an 'upkeep' cost (you will still draw 10 at a time from your min, but only 4 go into your resources when you have a large army and 'high upkeep'. This constant drain on resources forces you to be offensively active and accomplish goals. This will also reduce the 'camper' syndrome on the multiplayer level.

Overall, an visually pleasing, addicting gameplay RTS holding enough of the previous Warcraft elements to please the gamers, and enough thought into the storyline and gameplay of this newest to allow Warcraft III to stand on it's own.

"Job's done."



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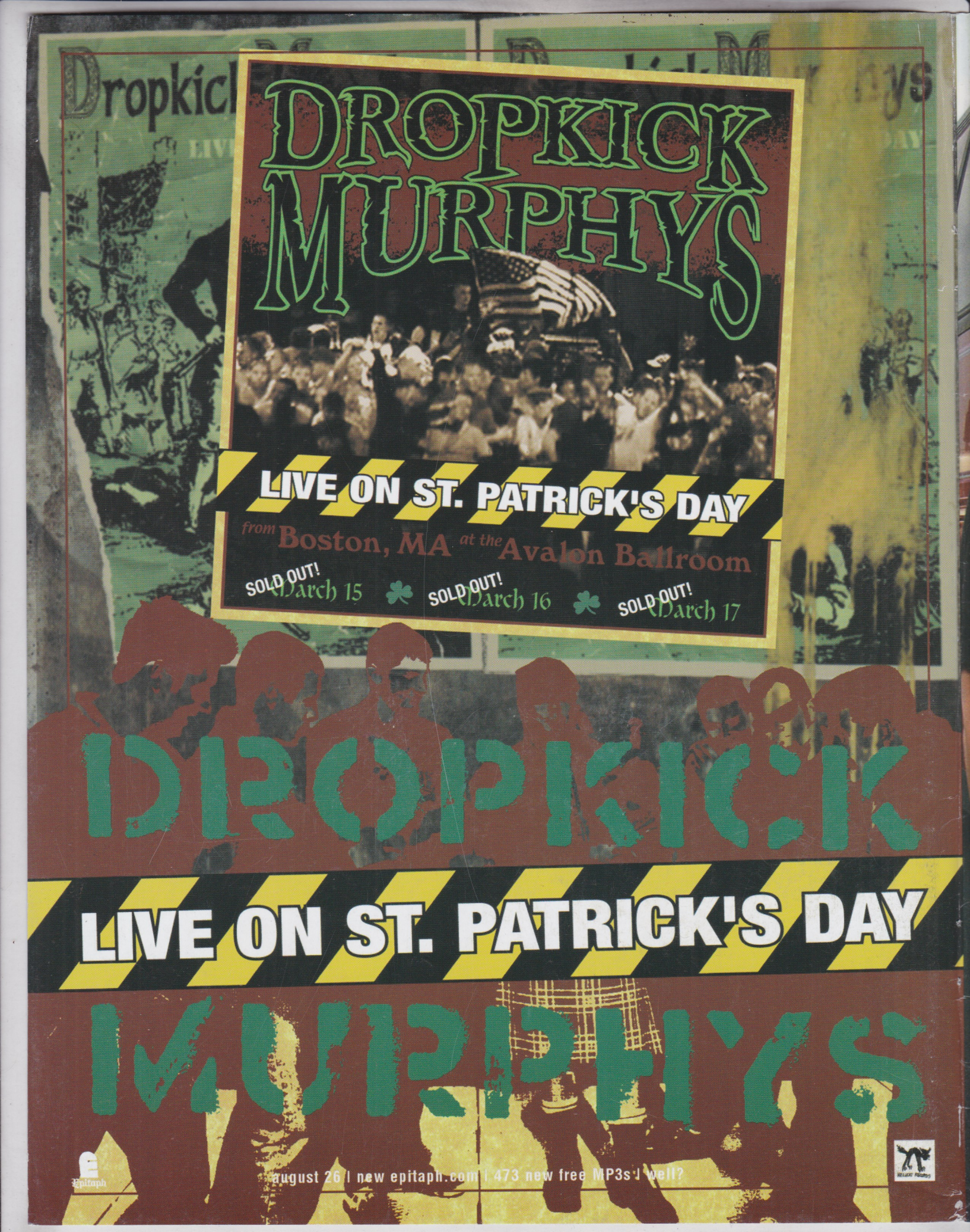
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Meshuggah

words with Tomas Haake

by Bushman

It's brutally mechanic. Polyrhythmic explorations of industrialized metal. 15 years in the forge makes it surgically precise. Bred in the land of Vikings, its ferocity is unparralled. A deconstruction of the system through an attack of sound. A jagged scar of vocals battle against impossible time shifts of machine gun guitars and a percussive element that is controlled chaos. Meshuggah continually earn the 'progressive' that precedes the word 'metal'. Despite the NWOCSB (New Wave Of Crappy Swedish Bands), Sweden has blessed the world with Meshuggah. Metal so ferocious, it was used as a weapon by young Jack Osbourne to launch an auditory assault on his neighbors. A newly released album called "Nothing" delivers another crushing blow of metal for the masses. And with a slot on this years Ozzfest, Meshuggah add a much needed dose of credibility to the lineup.

The two most dynamic aspects of the band are the apocalyptic lyrics, and the multi-rhythmic drums.

Tomas Haake is responsible for both.